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THE SECOND COMMANDMENT AND CHURCH REFORM

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Introduction

The Colloquy called by the Queen Mother, Catherine de Médici, at St. Germain-en-Laye in January and February, 1562, is a significant chapter in the history of the interpretation of the second commandment. It also provides a good instance of the inevitable interplay of diplomatic, political, and religious factors affecting the efforts at reconciliation—or at least tolerance—between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Catherine de Médici's name is perhaps most popularly associated with what happened a decade later, the St. Bartholomew Day's massacre. That event, however, represented the stunning failure of her attempts to obtain sufficient agreement on beliefs and religious practices to avoid just such a tragedy. It was a decade that saw less and less room for negotiation on points of doctrine and observances, a decade in which irenic voices were increasingly ignored or actively denounced, a decade of hardening into the positions whose defense provided sanctions for religious wars for years to come. In the opening days of 1562, however, even after the disappointing result of the Colloquy of Poissy on the eve of the resumption of the Council of Trent, there were still proposals made for the reform of the church shared by Roman Catholics and Reformed. There was a strong stream of conciliatory evangelicals among the Reformed and among the Roman Catholics. That irenic stream deserves to be remembered at least as much as the opposing arguments of the time need to be faced and candidly reexamined.

The use and abuse of images is of more than historical interest. The role of images—their nature, power, and role for good or ill—affects persons at the deepest levels of their piety and imagination. Many of the same issues debated in the context of the 1560s' colloquies have not disappeared, though their expression may have changed. Few today would defend the irreparable damage done by the iconoclasm of the sixteenth century and the French Revolution; and few could fail to praise the irrepressible artistic creativity that persevered despite such discouragement. We are faced with unmistakable ironies when it comes to the use and abuses of images. There are some who claim

lineage with the Reformed pastors but who often welcome into the sanctuary all manner of what is ambitiously claimed to be art. They do so with fewer explicit criteria than were articulated by the most traditional of Roman Catholic defenders of images. Whether the devotion given, say, to St. Jude is more deleterious than the proliferation of balloons, butterflies, and sloppily done banners, it would be hard to say. Both phenomena seem to point to a deep human quest for the ultimate, a quest that must be acknowledged and channeled if it is not to find expression in less than felicitous forms. Perhaps there is a hunger for tangibility in religious matters which needs to be satisfied in one way or another and which, if not rightly channeled, perpetuates either indiscriminate abuse of images or equally indiscriminate iconoclasm. In any event, the grosser expressions of this need are only on one end of the spectrum that also extends to the genuine comfort and hope that persons undoubtedly find in such religious expressions.

Almost all the parties committed to church reform in France in the 1560s agreed on the need for some correction of the uses being made of images in worship. One could have expected some agreements on reform in this area, especially since the most violent conflicts often took the form of riotous iconoclasm and horrified defence of images. At least that was the expectation of Catherine de Médici in keeping the Colloquy going which had been begun at Poissy the previous months, and at least that apparently was the expectation of some of the theologians who gathered at the chateau of St. Germain. Some progress had been made at Poissy in at least identifying the formulations on which future discussions might take place. The parties had discussed one of the most delicate matters of doctrine, the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. A learned, irenic party had asserted itself powerfully. Catherine was determined to give that party another chance at formulating an agreement on *some* matter. Achieving agreement on some matter of doctrine or practice was important to show that the French court and clergy were capable of church reform on their own initiative, and did not need to be instructed by the Spanish Hapsburgs and the Council of Trent.

To understand the positions maintained at St. Germain-en-Laye it will be helpful to recall (section one) the negotiations among certain of the Roman Catholic and Reformed theologians at Poissy. In doing so, we shall also note an ironic reversal of doctrine in the positions set forth by the leading Reformed theologian, Théodore de Bèze, and by the leading theologian of one of the Roman Catholic parties, Claude d'Espence. We shall then (section two) turn to the course of the work done at St. Germain-en-Laye, especially by d'Espence whose position (the reform of the abuse of images) is contrasted both with the majority Roman Catholic position (mainly a defence of current practices)

and the Reformed pastors' position (against any use whatsoever of any kind of images in worship). To help understand the theological and anthropological reasons behind the Reformed pastors' position at St. Germain-en-Laye we will, in the next section (three), consider what by then was the most influential Reformed view on images, that of Calvin. The final section (four) will note two of the most important diplomatic and religious consequences of the debate.

I am indebted to Robert Kingdon whose *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France*[1] sparked my interest in Nicholas des Gallars in whom diplomatic and theological aims were typically intertwined. That led me to the intriguing correspondence surrounding the calling and conduct of the Colloquy at Poissy, on which Donald Nugent's work[2] has been especially useful, and on which H. Klipffel's earlier study[3] includes valuable resources. My subsequent work on the Colloquy at St. Germain-en-Laye was enabled by sabbaticals and research grants from Princeton Theological Seminary. I also want to acknowledge the hospitality extended me by the Benedictine community at Ealing Abbey during my recent work in London.

David Willis-Watkins
Princeton, 1994

[1] Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France, 1555–1563* (Geneva: Droz, 1956).

[2] Donald Nugent, *Ecumenism in the Age of the Reformation: The Colloquy of Poissy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[3] H. Klipffel, *Le Colloque de Poissy: Étude sur la Crise Religieuse et Politique de 1561* (Paris: Librarie Internationale, 1867).

Abbreviations

AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
ARG	*Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, Berlin, etc., 1903 ff.
BSHPF	*Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, Paris, 1852 ff.
CH	*Church History*, Chicago, 1932 ff.
CHJ	*Cambridge Historical Journal*, London, etc., 1923 ff.
CO	Baum, W., E. Cunitz and E. Reuss, ed. *Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*. Braunschweig und Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke & Sons, 1863 ff.
CR	Bretschneider, C. G., ed. *Corpus Reformatorum*. Hallis Saxonum: C. A. Schwetschke, 1834 ff.
CSP	Calendar of State Papers, London, Public Records Office.
HE	de Bèze, Théodore. *Histoire Ecclésiastique des Églises Reformées au Royaume de France*. ed. Th. Marzial. Lille: Leleux, 1841–1842.
IAW	Gutmann, Joseph, ed. *The Image and the Word: Confrontations in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977.
ICM	McNeill, John T., ed. *John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
KBM	Dohmen, C. and T. Sternberg, ed. *Kein Bildnis Machen: Kunst und Theologie im Gespräch*. Wurzburg: Echter, 1987.
KCP	Klipffel, H. *Le Colloque de Poissy: Étude sur la Crise Religieuse et Politique de 1561*. Paris: Librarie Internationale, 1867.

MAH	*Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, Paris, 1881 ff.
MPG	Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca*. Paris: 1857 ff.
MPL	Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina*. Paris: 1844 ff.
MSHP	*Memoires de la Societe de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, Paris, 1875 ff.
NCP	Nugent, Donald. *Ecumenism in the Age of the Reformation: The Colloquy of Poissy*. Harvard Historical Studies, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.
OS	Barth, P. and P. Niesel, ed. *Johannis Calvini Opera Selecta*. München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1926–1936.
PRO	Public Records Office, London
RCP	de Ruble, Alphonse. "Le Colloque de Poissy" (Journal). *MSHP* 16 (1889): 1–56.
RH	*Revue Historique*, Paris, 1876 ff.
RefJ	*Reformed Journal*, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1951 ff.
SCJ	*Sixteenth Century Journal*, St. Charles, Mo., etc., 1972 ff.
SP	*State Papers*, Public Records Office, London.
SRTH	*Studies in Reformed Theology and History*, Princeton, N.J., 1993 ff.

I

Real Presence and Realpolitique: The Colloquy of Poissy

The Colloquy[4] was an event which intrigued persons of the period itself. That was partly because of the impressive list of persons Catherine de Médici was able to gather for the event, partly because so much was at stake with the success or failure of the conference, and partly because none of the parties involved wanted to bear the onus if the attempted reconciliation failed. The latter accounts for the number of copies of the proceedings that were made at the time and carefully communicated to the several foreign affairs offices of the leading European governments. In this chapter we will look, first, at

[4] On Poissy, in addition to Nugent, op. cit., and Klipffel, op. cit., see also Jules Delaborde, *Les Protestants à la Cour de Saint-Germain lors du Colloque de Poissy* (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1874); Alphonse de Ruble, "Le Colloque de Poissy," *MSHP* 16 (1889): 1–56; H. Outram Evennett, "The Cardinal of Lorraine and the Colloquy of Poissy," *CHJ* 2 (1927): 133–150; Alain Dufour, "Das Religionsgespräch von Poissy: Hoffnungen der Reformierten und der Moyenneurs" in *Die Religionsgespräche der Reformationszeit*, Gerhard Mueller, ed. (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1980), pp. 117 ff.; H. Outram Evennett, "Claude d'Espence et son 'Discours' au Colloque de Poissy," *RH* 164 (1930): 40–78; Théodore de Bèze, *Histoire Ecclésiastique des Églises Reformées au Royaume de France*, Th. Marzial, ed. (Lille: Leleux, 1841–1842); Joseph Roserot de Melin, "Diario dell' Assemblea de'Vescovi à Poissy," *MAH* 39 (1921–1922): 47–151; Blaise de Montluc, *Memoires* (Paris: Foucault, 1821); Peter Martyr Vermigli, "A Personal Confession at Poissy" (1561) in *Reformed Reader*, William Stacy Johnson and John H. Leith, eds. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 322; Catherine de Médici, *Lettres*, Vol. 1 (1533–1563) (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1880); Lucien Romier, *Catholiques et Huguenots à la Cour de Charles IX* (Paris: Perrin, 1924); François de Lorraine Guise, "Correspondance de François de Lorraine, duc de Guise, avec Christophe, duc de Würtemburg: Conférence de Saverne; Massacre de Vassy," *BSHPF* (1875), 71–83, 113–122, 209–221, 499–511; Joseph de Croze, *Les Guises, les Valois, et Philippe II* (Paris: Librairie d'Amyot, 1846); Charles Champion, *Charles IX* (Paris: Grasset, 1939); Claude de Sainctes, *Discours sur le saccagement des églises catholiques par les hérétiques anciens et nouveaux calvinistes* (Verdun: N. Bacquenois, 1562); Michel François, ed., *Correspondance du Cardinal François de Tournon* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1946); John Neale, *The Age of Catherine de Médici* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1943) and excerpt, "The Failure of Catherine de Médici" in *The French Wars*

the Queen Mother's aims in calling the Colloquy; second, at the debates before the whole assembly; and, third, at the exchange of several drafts on the relation between Christ's promise and the believers' faith in accounting for Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper.

The Diplomacy of Catherine de Médici

The principal actor in calling the Colloquy of Poissy, in holding it together, and in seeing to its continuance at St. Germain-en-Laye was the remarkable Catherine de Médici.[5] At forty-three, she was the widow of one King of France, Henry II (killed in a jousting tournament in 1559), and the Queen Mother of two, Francis I (died in 1560) and Charles IX (at the time of Poissy, aged eleven) over whose court she presided. She was the daughter-in-law of Francis I in more than name. She represented in her policies the zeal of one displaced from her native Italy, bringing with her the propensity for renaissance that often put her in opposition to "the Sorbonnists." Her controlling agenda were those things which would secure for the Valois a strong hold on the future monarchy and for France a strong position internationally, especially over against the Spanish Hapsburgs.

Catherine had two main objectives in taking the initiative to arrange for the Colloquy of Poissy. She wanted to avert further outbreaks of armed conflict between Roman Catholic and Reformed leaders, and she wanted to demonstrate that the French church could reform itself with the King's encouragement without referring the matters to a council convoked by the Pope. She had less to fear from Tudor England—indeed the Elizabethan settlement being worked out, with the head of state as the secular head of the church, corresponded to some of the more ambitious hopes for a Gallican Church—than she had to fear from Philip II of Spain. To accomplish these two main objectives, she had to be able to show the feasibility of some theological agreement for a tolerant *modus vivendi*.

Although the alignments rapidly shifted depending on which issue was be-

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of Religion, J. H. M. Salmon, ed. (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1967), 33–39; Nancy Lynn Roelker, *Queen of Navarre Jeanne d'Albret* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968); and, for des Gallars, Andrew Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth-Century London* (Oxford Historical Monographs, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

[5] Jacques Castelnau, *Catherine de Médicis (1519–1589)* (Paris: Hachette, 1954); Lucien Romier, *Le Royaume de Catherine de Médicis: La France à la veille des guerres de religion* (Paris: Perrin, 1922); John Neale, *The Age of Catherine de Médici*, op. cit.; Jean Orieux, *Catherine de Médicis* (n.p.: Flammarion, 1986); B.-M. de Lacombe, *Les Débuts des guerrres de religion (1559–1564): Catherine de Médicis entre Guise et Condé* (Paris: Perrin, 1889); Henri Nogueres, *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew*, translated by Claire Engle (New York: Macmillan, 1970).

ing dealt with, we can say there were four main political groups within France that had to be taken seriously and who were therefore asked to be represented at Poissy. There were, of course, as many sub-groups and factions as inevitably form around any court.[6] The first group was what we may call the inner court. It included the King, the Chancellor Michel de l'Hospital, and (I think he belongs in this inner group) Jean de Montluc Bishop of Valence. The second group was that which represented the so-called Triumvirate, comprised, since Easter 1561, of the Constable Anne de Montmorency, the Duke of Guise, and the Marshall Jacques d'Albon de Saint-André. This group was united in opposing any Protestant influence and was committed to maintaining a monarchy that was strong, French, and Roman Catholic. They were not opposed to such a Roman Catholic monarchy's role in the reform of the French church. This is the party of the Guises (Francis the Duke, just mentioned; Charles the Cardinal of Lorraine, the younger of the two, being thirty-seven at Poissy; the Cardinal of Guise; and the Bishop of Sens) who could make common cause with the court, but who had as strong dynastic ambitions as the Valois and Bourbons, to whom they were also related.[7] The third group was made up of Reformed leaders—political leaders, pastors, theologians, and lay representatives. This group included the Prince of Condé, Jeanne d'Albret and (for a while) her husband the King of Navarre, and the Châtillons (Gaspard the Admiral Coligny, and Odet the Cardinal and Archbishop of Beauvais). The fourth group is, like the others, difficult to name fairly, but its unifying feature was its dedication to eliminating the errors of the Protestants already condemned, since 1521, by the Sorbonne. This party wanted monarchial support for their opposition to Protestants, but they wanted all controversial matters

[6] I am aware that a contemporary figure, George Cassander, saw that again all Gaul was divided in parts that he called the "papists," the "huguenots" and, simply, a third party. (Nugent, op. cit., pp. 23, 24.) He saw the first two as opposite extremes, and the third party as moderates. Among these latter Cassander included Catherine, the Chancellor l'Hospital, Montluc the Bishop of Valence, Charles Guises the Cardinal of Lorraine, and Anthony Bourbon the King of Navarre. While too simple, Cassander's symmetry is of interest because of the way the huguenots were lumped together as extremists (this was his judgment in 1561, which was after the failed Conspiracy of Amboise) and for the way the Cardinal of Lorraine is included in the moderate party. Hindsight after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day—and indeed hindsight after the Massacre at Vassy, hard on the heels of the Colloquy of St. Germain-en-Laye—has tended to locate the Cardinal of Lorraine among the extremists and to minimize his moderating influence in 1561 and 1562. See also Delaborde, op. cit., pp. 4, 5; Christin, *Une Révolution Symbolique: l'Iconoclasm Huguenot et la Reconstruction Catholique* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1991), pp. 52, 53 on the party of the "moyenneurs," and Dufour, "Das Religionsgespräch von Poissy: Hoffnungen der Reformierten und der Moyenneurs," op. cit.

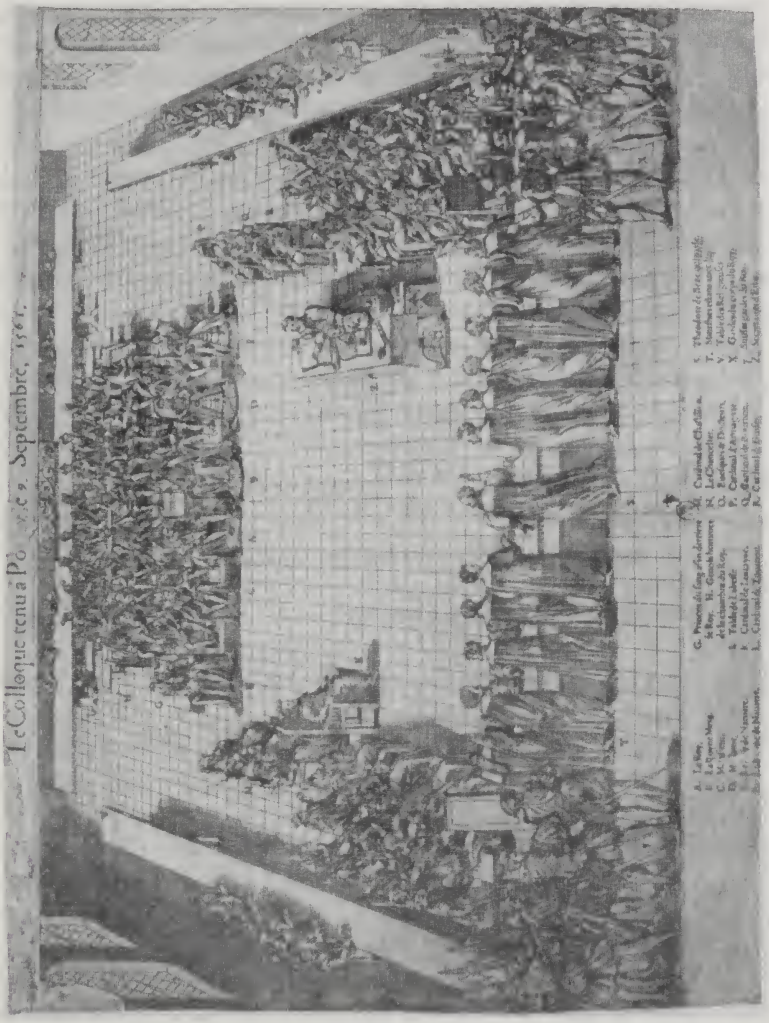
[7] For these brothers, see Evenett, "The Cardinal of Lorraine and the Colloquy of Poissy," *CHJ* 2 (1927): 133–150.

of Church reform referred not to a national synod but to the council called by the Pope. In this latter regard, their interests overlapped with those of the Spanish Habsburg ambassador to the French court and those of the General of the Jesuit Order, Jacob Lainez.

The Pope's bull convoking the General Council was issued 29 November 1560, and set the date for its beginning the following Easter. Like any unwelcome invitation, it unleashed ingenious maneuvering of avoidance. The German princes who held to the Augsburg Confession gathered in Naumberg in January 1561,[8] reaffirmed their unity in agreeing on the Augsburg Confession, declined the Pope's invitation, and urged upon the French court a similar response. Easter 1561 came and went and the Popes' Council did not begin. Instead, Catherine moved ahead with invitations to the National Council which were sent on June 12, to begin July 20 at Poissy. The site was a good choice. The priory at Poissy had a spacious hall for meeting, and it was quite close to the royal chateau at St. Germain-en-Laye. Although the gathering at Poissy in 1561 is perhaps most remembered for the Colloquy on the Lord's Supper, it was a National Synod of the Gallican Church to which the Colloquy was added. As a National Synod, it proposed a number of significant reforms affecting the clergy themselves. It was not until September 9 that the Colloquy began.

The engraving of the assemblage at Poissy in Tortorel and Perissin shows the impressive gathering. The Reformed ministers, de Bèze in the center of them, are standing before the representatives of the state and the church. The Abbess' table is at the back of the room; in front of it are arrayed the royal family with the King and the Queen Mother in the center and the King and Queen of Navarre on either side. The princes of the blood are behind them, and they in turn are flanked by "the gentlemen of the King's chambers"–in effect, the cabinet and advisors. To the left and in front of the others is Charles Guise the Cardinal of Lorraine. Behind him to his left are Cardinal Tournon, Cardinal Châtillon and the Chancellor Michel de l'Hospital. Facing them, on the right of the engraving and in the same level of prominence are Cardinal Armagnac, Cardinal de Bourbon, and Cardinal de Guise. Further away from

[8] For the Assembly of Protestant princes at Naumberg, January 1561, see pages 106–112 of Ernst Koch, "Striving for the Union of Lutheran Churches: The Church-Historical Background of the Work Done on the Formula of Concord at Magdeburg," *SCJ* 8, no. 4 (1977): 105–121. Note the correspondence of Queen Elizabeth to the princes requesting them to decline the Papal invitation for a next session of the General Council, and encouraging them to present a common protestant front in support of French protestants. The Augsburg Confession on which they agreed was, of course, the unaltered one of 1530. Note also the Palatine request that the Latin of 1530 be the accepted text, since its article on the Lord's Supper was more agreeable to the Reformed who found support in the Palatinate.



Le Colloque de Poissy, séance du 9 septembre 1561.
Gravure du recueil de Tortorel et Perrissin.

Théodore de Bèze, standing with the other Reformed pastors, addressing the assembly in the Priory at Poissy. (From the catalogue of the Exposition organized by the Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français, *Calvin et La Réform Francaise: Exposition* . . . Paris: Bibliotheque Nationale, Mars, 1935.)

the royalty, on the right and left, are the rows of "doctors and bishops"–some forty bishops and archbishops, the twelve theologians of the Sorbonne, and the canon lawyers. Right center is the table of the secretary. On both sides of the refectory, running its length, are the tables of the nuns. Standing before these personages are the Reformed ministers. Only de Bèze is named, because presumably the engraving depicts his address September 9th. The other ministers at the Colloquy were[9] Pierre Martyr, Jean de la Tour, Nicolas de Gallars, Jehan Reymon-Merlin, François de St. Pol, François de Morel, Augustin Marlorat, Jean de Lespine, Nicolas de Folion, Jean Mallot, Claude Boissière, and Jehan Bouquin–a total of thirteen, though the engraving shows only twelve because Peter Martyr came later. The bottom right and left corners of the engraving show the King's body guards. They were not decorative. They were there to provide the protection Catherine had promised the ministers. They were also there to assure that no party (including Condé, who was implicated in both the Conspiracy of Amboise and of Lyons) took the assembly as an occasion for solving rivalry by force.

Debates Before the Assembly

After opening remarks by the young King and the Chancellor, it was Francis the Duke of Guise, the proven military commander, who introduced the ministers. De Bèze then spoke for the ministers and delivered the first discourse for discussion at the Colloquy.[10]

De Bèze presented a thorough, well-organized summary of Reformed theology and practices in comparison with those of Roman Catholicism–those of Roman Catholicism as he understood them and on which he welcomed correction if he misunderstood them. He took care to make clear the matters of fundamental doctrine on which the Reformed and Roman Catholics were agreed. These included the Triune nature of God, the unity of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ, the perpetual virginity of Mary the Godbearer, and the Holy Catholic Church outside which there is no salvation. There were matters on which he thought there to be agreement; he could state the Reformed doctrine on them but was not sure if the Roman Catholic theologians were fully in clear agreement themselves on these. Those were the following. Christ alone has provided complete satisfaction for all our sins, and his all sufficient sacrifice, made once for all, cannot be repeated. The gospel frees the conscience from obedience to customs that are accretions to

[9] I give them as listed in AN G8*589b, p. 434.
[10] See HE, Vol. I, pp. 316 ff.; Nugent, op. cit., pp. 96 ff.

Christ's teachings. Faith alone does not mean faith without works, since true faith entails good works which are not of themselves meritorious but are, like the sinner, accepted for Christ's sake. The decisions of the ecumenical councils are to be accepted because, and only because, they teach what is agreeable to scripture. The same applies to the doctors of the early church. Where they teach something contrary to scripture—and here de Bèze indulged himself in giving a lesson of examples of where this had occurred—neither councils nor church fathers are to be followed.

De Bèze then turned to the sacraments.[11] Before we review that part of his discourse, however, it is worth noting that so far he has summarized teachings which were those of the Reformed Churches but which were not distinctively Reformed. Up to this point—including the way works are treated in relation to faith, and the way conciliar authority is related to scripture (not to mention the formal agreement on the Triune nature of God and on Chalcedonian Christology)—de Bèze's presentation has nothing in it that is contrary to the Augsburg Confession. Nor did it conflict, on these points so far, with the Cardinal of Lorraine's reply to de Bèze. That included the once-for-all character of Christ's sacrifice, since, according to Lorraine, the Mass does not repeat it but reoffers it. The breakdown of communication (to use the modern, but in this case helpful, idiom) occurred seriously over three matters: what de Bèze said concerning the relation between sign and substance in the sacraments; what de Bèze said about the relation between Christ's ascension and Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper; and whether de Bèze's teaching on these two things accurately represented the Reformed churches in France.

This is the definition de Bèze gives of sacraments:

> Sacraments are visible signs by means of which the conjunction that we have with our Lord Jesus Christ is not simply signified or figured but also is truly offered to us from our Lord, and consequently ratified, sealed and, as it were, engraved by the power of the Holy Spirit on those who by a true faith apprehend what is thus signified and presented to them.[12]

This definition is, as was usual with de Bèze, carefully formulated to contain the main features the Reformed considered necessary to an accurate understanding of the sacraments. Christ does not begin to be joined to us with the sacraments; that is what is signified, figured, truly offered and so ratified, sealed, engraved on the hearts of believers. This signing, figuring, truly offer-

[11] For de Bèze's sacramental theology see Jill Raitt, *The Eucharistic Theology of Theodore Beza: Development of the Reformed Doctrine* (Chambersburg, PA: American Academy of Religion, 1972); see also Paul F. Giesendorf, *Théodore de Bèze* (Genève: Alexandre Julien, 1967).

[12] HE, Vol. I, p. 514; cited in Nugent, op. cit., p. 98.

ing, ratification, sealing, engraving of Christ's union with us is accomplished by the power of the Spirit. To whom is the sacrament thus effective? To believers, according to de Bèze's definition. When it comes to the sacraments, the believers are "those who by a true faith apprehend what is thus signified and presented to them."

De Bèze's initial presentation on the sacraments was a good opening for discussion. Its definition of the nature of the sacraments is not exceptional. Nor—as far as it goes—is it a polemical definition. Nugent is only partially correct when he says that de Bèze "seemed to underscore the word 'signified,' which was not to diminish the sacraments, but to distinguish the sign of the thing from the thing signified. They were to be distinguished, but not separated."[13] Actually, in his choice of terms, de Bèze is simply working from within the Augustinian framework of signs' relation to what is signified, a framework common to most of the official definitions of the sacraments in the Western church. And, if anything, de Bèze's definition here takes special care to make it clear that the conjunction of Christ with believers "is not simply signified or figured but also truly offered to us from our Lord. . . ." In subsequent drafts at an attempted agreement, that note is even more strongly sounded; but it is already contained in de Bèze's opening discourse.

What proved to be the great debating point was the question, to whom is this signification and true offering made? In the course of the debates, de Bèze's answer (that this signification and true offering are made to those who with true faith apprehend what is thus signified and presented to them) got reformulated in such a way that he increasingly laid emphasis not on signification (as Nugent suggests) or even on true offering—but on faith. In that movement of his at the Colloquy, de Bèze does not (as Nugent suggests) simply follow Calvin; in fact he moves away from the balanced realism of Calvin's understanding of the sacraments.

We will return to this development later, but before doing so we need to recall de Bèze's main point about the relations between sign and substance and how that relation bears on the doctrine of transubstantiation. On that particular point he, de Bèze, does in point of fact follow Calvin. The sign and the substance of a sacrament are neither to be separated nor confused the one with the other; when either of these mistakes is made, the nature of the sacraments is misunderstood. De Bèze's and Calvin's objection is not primarily the popular objection of Protestants that it is a form of idolatry. The Reformed objection is that the doctrine of transubstantiation threatens the reality of the signs by which Christ has promised to be truly present. By threatening the

[13] Nugent, op. cit., p. 98.

reality of the signs, the doctrine of transubstantiation undercuts a correct understanding of Christ's true, real presence in the Lord's Supper.

The doctrine of transubstantiation was wrong, according to these reformers, mainly because it destroyed the reality of the signs which are joined to the reality of the sacrament who is Christ and his benefits. The substance of the sacrament is not (as Nugent reads de Bèze as saying) the signs. De Bèze's and Calvin's objection arises from taking the signs seriously. Their objection is not the one encountered later among those who feared taking the signs too seriously and acted as if sacraments got in the way of true spirituality. De Bèze's arguments against "consubstantiation" (and the term is used here at Poissy) are also interesting, and are twofold. First, he does not find warrant for it in scripture. Second, the doctrine of consubstantiation is superfluous because everything which is sought by the doctrine is already supplied by a teaching that neither separates nor confuses the signs and the substance of the sacrament.

De Bèze's address went on to speak about the way the Reformed understood the matters covered by the Roman Catholics in the other sacraments besides baptism: confirmation, penance, marriage, ministry, care for the sick. But before he got to these subjects, his speech was interrupted by the well-known disturbance made by his unfortunate remark about Christ's bodily presence being as far from us as heaven is from earth. De Bèze was actually trying to assure his listeners that the Reformed doctrine did not deny Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper–only Christ's bodily presence there. Christ is really present in the Lord's Supper, "but if we regard the distance of things (as we must when there is a question of his bodily presence and of his humanity considered separately), we say that his body is as far removed from bread and wine as is heaven from earth."[14]

More surprising than the reaction to de Bèze's words is that he seems to be curiously oblivious to what all the furor was about. This is usually treated as a blunder, a departure from de Bèze's own skill as a spokesperson and diplomat. But it did not apparently occur to him at the time, nor later, that the real scandal was not what he said about distance, as crudely put as that was, but what he said about "his [Christ's] humanity considered separately." This was indeed an immense blunder, but it probably was a blunder in his inability to bring forward and apply to his understanding of the Lord's Supper the implications of the Chalcedonian Christology which he had already said, in the first part of his address, the Reformed agreed to.[15]

[14] HE, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 516.

[15] The separation widened–or became more evident–between de Bèze's applied Christology and Lutheran applied Christology with subsequent colloquies, especially that of Montbeliard, for which see Jill Raitt, *The Colloquy of Montbeliard: Religion and Politics in the Sixteenth Century*

The Roman Catholics were divided about how to respond, or even whether to respond at all, to de Bèze's presentation. Immediately after de Bèze finished, Cardinal Tournon pressed the King not to accept the errors of this heretic. Catherine, who later made it known that she thought de Bèze's remarks had set back the Colloquy, assured Tournon that she and the King would always adhere to the Catholic faith. The next day the bishops debated the question of a response to de Bèze, and it was finally decided that Cardinal Lorraine would reply on behalf of the others. He did so on September 16 in a speech that most found to be pertinent and irenic. Des Gallars and de Bèze found it to be neither.

The speech appears with a preceding table of contents in most of the records of the Colloquy. The fifth section of his reply to de Bèze is on the "primary authority of the divine Word in the Church," the sixth treats the role of ecclesiastical tradition, the seventh deals with the use of the councils in the church. These are significant treatments of the nature of revelation and authority in the church, explicated by a moderate and learned French prelate who wants the reform of the French church, the peace of France, and the return to the Catholic fold of the errant so-called Reformed pastors and congregations.

Cardinal Lorraine disagrees with de Bèze that ecumenical councils may err, though his argument–and the argument of others like him on this point–seems one of semantics of what one means by err or seemed tautological to the Protestants. As far as I have been able to see, he does not however use the word "infallible" for the councils, though he does use it of the "divine Word." There is one source or fountain of revelation which comes to us through scripture and tradition, though scripture has the prime authority in determining which is the true tradition. He sees the church's teaching as not a mere repeating what scripture says and refusing to admit anything that is not explicit in scripture–rather as that of not admitting that which is proscribed by scripture's authority. His presentation is couched in terms of a reply to what was presented by de Bèze and not as a final position. He presents his remarks with the hope that they will prove useful to clarify the Roman Cath-

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(New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). For the opposition of Jacob Andreas to Olivean at the Colloquy of Maulbronn and to de Bèze at Montbeliard, see David Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), pp. 14–19. This increasing separation was in contrast to what tended to characterize much of earlier relations between Reformed and Luther (and, of course, Melancthon), for which see Robert Linder, "The Early Calvinists and Martin Luther: A Study in Evangelical Solidarity" in *Regnum, Religio et Ratio: Essays Presented to Robert M. Kingdon*, Jerome Friedman, ed. (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1987) 103–116; see also B. McCormack, *God For Us: Incarnation and Atonement in the Reformed Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1993).

olic position so the participants at the Colloquy might find an acceptable formulation, or an interim agreement, for further clarification of their respective doctrine.

Sections fifteen and sixteen are of most interest for our present inquiry.

Section fifteen is on "the articles of the ascension and session of Christ."[16] Here Lorraine points out that the Church fathers, not given to speculation, held to both the truth of Christ's ascension and the truth of the presence of the whole person of Christ. Lorraine focuses his interpretation of the relation between the ascension and the presence of the whole Christ on the mystery of our union with Christ. That union itself is not corporeal but is "supernatural, supersubstantial, spiritual, ineffable, special and proper to the sacrament."

Section sixteen is on "the disagreement of the German Protestants with the sacramentarians." The terms used indicate the umbrella under which the Reformed were being considered by him and by the Würtemburg Lutherans: "sacramentarians." It is a description that Calvin in particular sought to avoid, and it derives from Bullinger's preference in his negotiations with Calvin in formulating the Consensus of Zurich, saying Christ is present "sacramentaliter" (whereas Calvin's usage was that Christ is present "substantialiter," "realiter," "spiritualiter").[17] The "sacramentalist" label stuck because the Consensus of Zurich gave Lutherans a good reason to treat all the Reformed as "the Zwinglians and Calvinists." Lorraine also used the terms this way after Poissy, as we shall see from the report of duc Christopher on his interview with the Guises.

It is not correct to say that Lorraine introduced this section in order to drive a wedge, in the eyes of the court, between the German Protestants and the French and Swiss Reformed. De Bèze had brought up the matter of "consubstantiation" taught by the other Protestants and said the Reformed disagreed with it. Lorraine is not arguing for the German Protestant position. He is pointing out that the German Protestants have expressed their agreement

[16] AN G8*589b, p. 462.

[17] On the Zurich Consensus, see Paul Rorem, *Calvin and Bullinger on the Lord's Supper* (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1989); and Timothy George, "John Calvin and the Agreement of Zurich" in *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, Timothy George, ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990). See B. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharist Theology of John Calvin* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 134–145 for a summary of Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and how the negotiations with Bullinger affected Calvin's relations with the Lutherans. For Calvin's understanding of the real presence see Paul Jacobs, "Pneumatische Realpräsenz bei Calvin," *Révue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse* 44 (1964): 381–401; David Willis, "Calvin's Use of Substantia" in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Genevensis Custos*, Wilhelm Neuser, ed. (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 1984), 289–301; and, especially on the ethical implications of this understanding, Hans Helmut Esser, "Abendmahlslehre, Abendmahlspraxis, Abendmahlsgemeinschaft in reformierter Sicht" in *Calvin, Erbe und Auftrag*, Willem Van 't Spijker, ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1991), 357–378.

with the Augsburg Confession and that the Reformed at Poissy have not made their agreement with them evident.[18] There is, of course, a step missing in this argument, and it is to show that "consubstantiation" is implied in the Augsburg Confession; the word is not there, though it is used in Lorraine's address.[19]

The next step, a Reformed reply to Lorriane, was postponed until September 24. De Bèze made that reply, and focused on countering Lorraine's objections to his, de Bèze's, original presentation. Of more interest that day was that Lorraine instead of responding himself, turned to Claude d'Espence to do so. He was an astute choice. D'Espence had a record of attempting to reconcile parties within France who were attempting reform, and this put his life in danger on more than one occasion.[20] If Lorraine had chosen to try to get an agreement from the Reformed by using the Augsburg Confession as an initial step, d'Espence's strategy followed a different route: he appealed to some writings of Calvin on which he hoped they could agree. D'Espence was quite right that Calvin preferred to use the term substance in speaking of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper.[21] Here is the form of the question to which it was necessary for the Reformed to reply for the Colloquy to gain a measure of clarification.

[18] See R. Stupperich, "La confession d'Augsbourg au Colloque de Poissy" in *Actes du Colloque Coligny, Paris, 1972* (Paris: Société d'Histoire du Protestantisme Français, 1974), 117–133; W. Nijenhuis, "Calvin and the Augsburg Confession" in *Ecclesia Reformata: Studies on the Reformation*, W. Nijenhuis, ed. (Leyden: Brill, 1972), 97–114; and Danielle Fischer, "Calvin et la Confession d'Augsbourg" in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Genevensis Custos*, W. Neuser, ed. (Frankfurt-a.-M.: Peter Lang, 1984), 245–271.

[19] AN G8*589b, p. 463.

[20] On d'Espence see H. O. Evenett, "Claude d'Espence et son Discours . . ." op. cit., pp. 40–77. D'Espence was called on by Francis I after the Peace of Crespy, 1544, to the assembly gathered at Melun to prepare the French response to the invitation to the first session of the Council of Trent–just as here, almost twenty years later he is doing the same for another session of Trent. In 1546 he visited Bucer in Strasbourg and discussed with him the questions of orders, disagreeing with Bucer's view that priests–and pastors–had the same authority to ordain as bishops–who were, in fact, the same as pastors. In 1547 he translated and published some sermons of Theodoret of Cyr; these made him suspect, again, with the Faculty of theology at the Sorbonne, and the sermons were placed on its *index librorum*. In 1548 he wrote *Institution d'un Prince Chrétien*, dedicated to Henry II, while he, d'Espence, was in Bologna, with Michel de l'Hospital, waiting for the opening of the council. Returning from Bologna, he stopped in Geneva and, among other things, discussed the same matter (doctrine of the ministry) as he had earlier with Bucer. He preached the Lenten series at St. Severin in 1557 (the sermons were sharply criticized by Belarmine and censured by Rome) and the Lenten series in Notre Dame in 1558. He was able to continue to teach and preach because he had as his protector the Cardinal Lorraine.

[21] That preference is not just a late product of his debate with Heshusius (as Nugent implies) nor is it accurate, as Nugent says, that "Calvinists generally avoided the term 'substantial presence,' preferring 'sacramental presence.'" (Nugent, op. cit., p. 137). There is, of course, a semantic prob-

> Since he [Calvin] says the body and blood of Jesus Christ to be in the Eucharist, to be substantially exhibited, given and received there, which he [Calvin] puts in a substantial but not local presence, may we not agree here on the true presence?[22]

When he was able, after having to deal with a long interruption by de Sainctes, to reply to d'Espence's question about Calvin's use, de Bèze made two points. First, he agreed that the words of Calvin that d'Espence cited were not unusual. Calvin frequently spoke that way, using those terms. Secondly, "substantially" in these cases just means, according to de Bèze, "really" as opposed to imaginary. As if bent on thus reducing the meaning of "substantially," de Bèze repeated the infelicitous expression "the symbols are on earth, the thing in heaven." He seems seriously to have intended such a separation between *signa* (if they are what he means by symbol in this case) and *res.* On this point, de Bèze seems honestly to have missed Calvin's insistence that they be held so firmly together that the *res*, which is Christ clothed with his benefits, is communicated with the *signs.* Otherwise one has to put aside or ignore or minimize the fundamental fact that the Lord's Supper confirms, reinforces, seals, guarantees, enables us to grow in: the accomplished union of Christ with believers.[23]

That centrality of the union of Christ with believers is what Lorraine himself had already insisted on as the reality that made preoccupation with questions of distance so strange to the fathers who held both to the reality of Christ's ascension and to Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper. It is no wonder that the moderate Roman Catholic party at Poissy did not know where to go next with the Colloquy. The Reformed seemed bent on playing into the hands of the Sorbonnists.

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lem already because Nugent's judgment depends on what is meant by Calvinists, and there is the problem of whether Calvin was one of them. In any event, the adverbial form was the most frequently used of either term: Christ present "sacramentaliter," or "substantialiter," "realiter" and "spiritualiter." Cf. D. Willis, "Calvin's use of Substantia," op. cit.

[22] Ibid.

[23] On the importance of doctrine of the union with Christ for Calvin's theology, see Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, translated by H. Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956); Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again" in *Calvin Studies III*, John Leith, ed. (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1986), 39–46; David Willis-Watkins, "The Unio Mystica and the Assurance of Faith According to Calvin" in *Calvin, Erbe und Auftrag*, op. cit., pp. 77–84; and of course, what remains the main treatment of the subject, Wilhelm Kolfhaus, *Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin*, Beitraege zur Geschichte und Lehre der reformierten Kirche (Neukirchen: Buchandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1939). A study well worth reexamination is John Nevin, *The Mystical Presence: A Vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist (1866)*, Vol. 4, Lancaster Series on Mercersberg Theology, Bard Thompson and George H. Bricker, eds. (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1966).

Proposed Wordings on Promise and Faith

As people were leaving the plenary session on September 24, d'Espence made an effort to get a formula before the participants that would be the basis for another discussion. He proposed this wording:

> We confess with a firm faith in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist the true body and blood of Christ really and substantially to exist, to be exhibited and eaten by the communicants.[24]

On the spot, de Bèze's response was to ask whether it would be acceptable to eliminate the verbs *esse* and *exhibere.* De Bèze's desire to eliminate those verbs is itself revealing. His suggestion was, of course, not acceptable to the Roman Catholics. However, the conferring among the theologians over a short formula, rather than responding to long addresses made in the presence of a large assembly, signalled the beginning of the next phase at Poissy. It is to this exchange of short formulations that we now turn.

On 9 October 1561, Nicolas Throckmorton reported to Queen Elizabeth[25] on the progress of the Colloquy at Poissy. With his letter he included copies of two formulations arrived at by the theologians working among themselves privately. The first of the enclosed formulations is dated the 30th of September, the second the 1st of October. The second one is done by five of the leading Reformed pastors and by five of the leading Roman Catholic theologians at the Colloquy. Throckmorton adds that these confessions had been proposed in order that the two sides at Poissy might come to some unsigned accord, that is, an accord which neither side would have to sign. The five Roman Catholic theologians were to get from the rest of the bishops a written response and communicate it to the five Reformed theologians. These are the formulations.

> Since faith makes present those things which are promised and since this faith takes very truly the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, in this way we confess the presence of his body and blood in the Holy Supper, in which he presents, gives and exhibits to us trully the substance of his body and his blood by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and there we receive and eat spiritually and by faith the body which died for us that we may be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh and thereby be made alive and receive all that is required for salvation.
>
> —30 September, 1561

[24] Quoted Nugent, op. cit., p. 144.

[25] PRO SP 70/31 (2715):454.II and 454.III in the CSP: For Elizabeth, #559/#595, 1, Sept. 30. In the PRO, SP70:438 and SP70:439 are copies of the same document.

> We confess that Jesus Christ in his Holy Supper presents, gives and exhibits trully the substance of his body and blood by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and that we take and eat sacramentally, spiritually and by faith the very body which died for us, that we may be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh and thereby be made alive and receive all that is required for our salvation. And because faith founded upon the Word of God makes and renders present the things which are promissed, and because we receive truly and actually the true and natural body and Blood of our Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit, in this way we acknowledge the presence of His Holy Body and Blood in His Holy Supper.
>
> –1 October, 1561

Those who worked on these drafts are named on the documents Throckmorton sent. The five Reformed are Peter Martyr, Théodore de Bèze, Nicolas des Gallars, August Marlorat and Jean de l'Espine. The five Roman Catholics named are the Bishop of Valence, the Bishop of Seéz, Salignac, Bouteiller and d'Espence.

Throckmorton did not send Elizabeth the draft of the next day, October 2, done by the team of five Reformed pastors, nor the important addition that d'Espence offered. Here it is, with d'Espence's emendation italicized and in brackets.

> We confess that Jesus Christ in the Holy Supper presents, gives and exhibits to us truly the substance of his body and his blood by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and that we take and eat sacramentally, spiritually and by faith the same body which died for us to be bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, so we thereby may be made alive and receive everything which is required for our salvation. And because faith founded on the Word of God makes present what is promised [*And because the Word and promise of God, on which our faith is based, makes present what is promised*], and because we take truly and in fact the true and natural body and blood of our Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit, in this way we confess the presence of his body and blood in the Holy Supper.

D'Espence's wording here represents a view that he, rightly, thought was closer to Calvin's teaching than what he understood de Bèze to be saying. It does not, of course, touch directly on the question of the ministry and who must preside at the celebration of the Lord's Supper or why. On those matters d'Espence differed from Calvin and the other Reformed theologians, including Bucer. By insisting on the priority of the Word and Christ's promise, and in seeing faith as the means by which we receive the reality enabled by the Word and Christ's promise, d'Espence's eucharistic theology, on those points, is closer to Calvin's than de Bèze's is–at least as the latter refused to alter the

Reformed pastor's version at Poissy. D'Espence represents here a genuine moderating or irenic position, not a watering down of doctrinal matters but a careful insistence on common ground which two sides held for very positive theological reasons, a common ground which was in danger of being relinquished because of external polemical pressures.

D'Espence's learned and convinced irenicism was not, at this time, an isolated position of his own. The moderating influence of Cardinal Lorraine *at this time*[26] is seen from his protection of one of the most learned and evangelical Roman Catholic theologians, Claude d'Espence–and it is evident in the reply he gave to Théodore de Bèze's address at Poissy. Both d'Espence and the Cardinal were aware that de Bèze did not speak for all Protestants in his fateful remarks made on September 9 (1561) at Poissy. They were well aware that not simply were there different Lutheran views on the matter but also that Calvin seemed to have taught differently in his 1541 treatise on the Lord's Supper. While we cannot speak of this complex of alternative eucharistic doctrine as a "group" represented at Poissy, still we cannot understand the dynamics of the debates if we ignore its influence. Was the desire to have those alternative Protestant eucharistic doctrines expressed at Poissy behind the arrival of German Protestants at the last minute? On the one hand all we know is that Poissy had failed to reach an agreement on the Lord's Supper by the time the German Protestants had arrived,[27] and on the other hand we know that, as far as Catherine was concerned, the failure at Poissy did not mean that the respective theologians' work on trying to get some measure of accord on the eucharist was finished. Of the seven items on the agenda she asked d'Espence to draw up for St. Germain-en-Laye, four of them dealt with the Lord's Supper. She still stubbornly hoped for the emergence of a text on the eucharist that would be part of an agreement sufficient to show progress in averting further outbreaks of religious war, and to show that the French court and the French church were capable of giving successful leadership on Church reform without the interference of the papal Council.

[26] See H. Outram Evennett, *The Cardinal of Lorraine and the Council of Trent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930).

[27] On the German theologians at Poissy, see Delaborde, *Les Protestants à la Cour de Saint-Germain lors du Colloque de Poissy*, op. cit., pp. 65–73; de Ruble, op. cit., pp. 46–49.

II

Reform by Correcting the Abuse of Images

Catherine de Médici was determined that the Colloquy she had called not disband entirely without some agreement on some matter of the reform of the Church in France. We have seen that she had already sought that modicum of agreement by moving the scene of the action from debate before a large assembly in Poissy to negotiations among theologians working in small groups in St. Germain-en-Laye. When even an agreement among the moderates on the nature of the Lord's Supper proved elusive, she still kept the theologians at work, this time on a wider range of topics. One of the topics at least offered a reasonable chance—so she thought—of producing sufficient results to show that her court was capable of engaging in reform initiation for the church in France and capable of forestalling a resumption of armed conflict over religion.

Catherine's determination to leave the Colloquy with at least some agreement on some topic was not blind stubbornness or wishful thinking. There were reforming voices among Protestants and among Roman Catholics on several items which augured well for some agreement. Moreover, it is quite possible that with the change of composition of the theological groups, she felt an attempted agreement on another topic might bear fruit. One area on which it was urgent to gain some agreement was the reform of the abuse of images in worship. Accord on that might provide the example of what could be done with other topics later on.

Catherine turned to the leading theologian of the reforming Roman Catholic party, Claude d'Espence, to draw up an agenda for the theologians at St. Germain-en-Laye. On January 27 he listed the "principal points which seem to separate us." They were the use of images, administration of the holy sacrament and baptism, the holy sacrament and holy communion, the sacrifice of the mass, the imposition of hands and the calling of ministers, and whether there be any hope of entering into doctrine. Of these six closely related matters, only the first item was dealt with.

The Reformed pastors who stayed on at St. Germain-en-Laye for the debate on images were de Bèze, Marlorat, Barbaste, and Perucel. The Roman Catholics present for the discussion on the images were representatives of the same parties that were in evidence at Poissy: Maillard, Salignac, d'Espence, Bouteiller, Democharès, Vigor, Pelletier, Fournier, Dehan, Lainez, and Picherel. The sessions began with the presentation of the Reformed pastors' stance, made by de Bèze on January 28. Catholic rejoinders to de Bèze followed, with debate, on January 31, February 1 and 2. At the end of these sessions, Catherine asked that the various parties draw up position papers and present them. That was done on February 11.

The same alignments we saw at Poissy operated here also. The opposing positions which finally triumphed at St. Germain-en-Laye are well enough known—simply because they were the ones that carried the day and set the patterns for subsequent developments. There was, however, another range of teaching committed to the reform of the abuse of images—in contrast to the alternative of either eliminating images altogether or perpetuating their misuse. Its chief spokesperson was d'Espence, and his presentation came in response to the position presented, first, by the Reforming pastors.

The Reformed View at St. Germain-en-Laye

The Reformed pastors' views were part of a long history of debate over images in the ancient,[28] the medieval,[29] and sixteenth-century[30] churches. It was

[28] Paul C. Finney, "Antecedents of Byzantine Iconoclasm: Christian Evidence before Constantine" in *IAW*, pp. 27–47; E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 83–150; H. F. von Campenhausen, "The Theological Problem of Images in the Early Church" in *Tradition and Life in the Church: Essays and Lectures in Church History* (London: 1968), 171–200.

[29] E. J. Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (London: 1930); Peter Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *English Historical Review* 88, no. 3 (1973): 1–34; A. Freeman, "Theodulf of Orleans and the Libri Carolini," *Speculum* 32 (1957): 663–705; S. Gero, "The Libri Carolini and the Image Controversy," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 18 (1973): 7–34; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); E. Kitzinger, *The Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West: Selected Studies* (London and Bloomington: 1976); E. Male, *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Age en France: Étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1908); F. Boespflug, "Die bildenden Künste und das Dogma: Einige Affären um Bilder zwischen dem 15. und 18. Jahrhundert" in *KBM*, pp. 149–166.

[30] H. D. Altendorf and P. Jezler, eds., *Bilderstreit: Kulturwandel in Zwinglis Reformation* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 1984); M. Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform* (New Haven: 1967); C. C. Christensen, *Art and the Reformation in Germany* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1979); C. C. Christensen, *Princes and Propaganda: Electoral Saxon Art of the Reformation* (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992); C. G. Coulton, *Art and the Reformation* (Cambridge: 1953); C. Garside, "L. Haetzer's Pamphlet Against Images: A Critical Study,"

also a history of iconoclasm,[31] not just debate, and it was recent, not just ancient, history. Though it was not usually the case with Lutherans, the removal of images from churches, if not their destruction, was already a hallmark of the Reformed influence internationally.[32]

The difference between Luther's[33] and most Reformed's attitude toward images was known at the Colloquy. It played a role in the consultation that Cardinal Lorraine had with Duke Christoph of Würtemberg after the Colloquy. One of the main things that brought Luther out of protective custody in the Wartburg was what he heard of Carlstadt's so-called reforms in Wittenberg, which included destruction of images. Luther, in his sermons of March of 1522 in Wittenberg, took the position that while it was better not to have images, their destruction was another form of works' righteousness, and the preaching of the Word would correct their abuse.[34] Carlstadt's treatise of the

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Mennonite Quarterly Review 34 (1960): 20–36; E. Panofsky, "Comments on Art and Reformation" in *Symbols in Transformation: Iconographic Themes at the Time of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 9–14; C. S. Wood, "In Defense of Images: Two Local Rejoinders to the Zwinglian Iconoclasm," *SCJ* 19 (1988): 25–44. R. Bornert, *La Réforme Protestante du Culte à Strasbourg au XVIe Siècle (1523–1598)* (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

[31] Olivier Christin, *Une Révolution Symbolique: l'Iconoclasm Huguenot et la Reconstruction Catholique* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1991); Natalie Z. Davis, "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France," *Past and Present* 59 (1973): 51–91; C. C. Christensen, "Iconcoclasm and the Preservation of Ecclesiastical Art in Reformation Neuerberg," *ARG* 61 (1970): 205–221, and "Patterns of Iconoclasm in the Early Reformation: Strasbourg and Basel" in *The Image and the Word*, J. Gutmann, ed. (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 107–148; J. Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535–1660* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); R. Withing, "Abominable Idols: Images and Image-breaking under Henry VIII," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982): 30–47. E. Duffy, *The Stripping of The Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[32] According to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, the removal of images is one of the things that would make Edward VI comparable to Josiah. Hence that passage from Cranmer's address to Edward VI at his coronation: "Your Majesty is God's Vice-regent and Christ's Vicar within your own dominions, and to seek with your predecessor Josias, God truly worshipped and idolatry destroyed, the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome banished from your subjects, and images removed" (cited in *IAW*, p. 5). By that date, of course, and for whatever mixture of motives of reform and private gain, vast amounts of art had been removed from churches and monasteries. Note also that removal of images is not the same as destruction of them—though often destruction was the way they were "removed"! This distinction figured where the reform was gradual or methodical and taken with interim steps, and it was advocated by the moderates like d'Espence.

[33] H. Preuss, *Martin Luther als Kuenstler* (Gütersloh: 1931); C. Christensen, "Luther's Theology and the Uses of Religious Art," *The Lutheran Quarterly* 22 (1970): 147–165; L. P. Spelman, "Luther and the Arts," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 6 (1951–1952): 166–175.

[34] "But now we must come to the images, and concerning them also it is true that they are unnecessary, and we are free to have them or not, although it would be much better if we did not have them at all. I am not partial to them . . . It should have been preached that images were nothing and that no service is done to God by erecting them; then they would have fallen

next year, *On the Abolition of Images*, was his defense of his actions and apparently influenced Zwingli.[35]

The Reformed views on images goes back to some of the earliest disputations with Roman Catholics. Irena Backus deals with these in her study of the disputations of the 1520's.[36] Zwingli made the elimination of images one of the chief features of his reform in Zurich.[37] Perhaps even more influential, however, were the arguments repeated and developed by Bucer, Farel, Viret, and Calvin.[38] When the Reformed pastors, therefore, prepared their position paper at St. Germain-en-Laye, they could summarize a doctrine rather commonly held among Reformed.

On January 28 de Bèze spoke for the Reformed pastors, and made an initial presentation in which he argued that the true position with regard to images was controlled by three principles.[39] The first is that it is not permitted to picture God in any form whatever. The second is that images should not be tolerated in Christian churches. The third is that even if images were tolerable in Christian churches, they should be accorded neither worship nor honor. These three principles de Bèze argued in a two-hour lecture drawing heavily on scriptures, on select Church fathers, and on the decisions of the Synod of Elvira and of the 794 Synod of Frankfurt, called by Charlemagne

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by themselves" (John W. Doberstein, ed., *Luthers Works: Sermons I*, Vol. 51, Luther's Works [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], 81–83). See C. Budenheimer, "Scandalum et jus divinum, theologische und rechtstheologische Probleme der ersten reformatorischen Innovationen in Wittenberg, 1521–1522," *Zeitschrift der Savigny Stiftung fuer Rechtsgeschichte* 90 (1973): 263–342; and J. S. Preuss, *Carlstadt's Ordinances and Luther's Liberty: a Study of the Wittenberg Movement, 1521–1522* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[35] See article on "Idolatry" by C. Eire, in D. McKim, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 190–192.

[36] Irena Backus, *The Disputations of Baden, 1526, and Berne, 1528: Neutralizing the Early Church* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1993).

[37] Zwingli treated the matter in two of his treatises of 1525, *Answer to Valentin Compar* and *On the True and False Religion* (C. Goettler, E. Jezler, and P. Jezler, "Warum ein Bilderstreit? Der Kampf gegen die 'Götzen' in Zurich als Beispiel" in *Bilderstreit*, D. Altendorf and P. Jezler, eds. [Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 1984], 83–102).

[38] Bucer presented his position in M. Buzer, *Grund und Ursach* . . . (Strasbourg: 1524), and his treatise of 1530 entitled *That Any Kind of Images May Not Be Permitted*. Guillaume Farel, *Du vray usage de la croix de Jesus-Christ et de l'abus et de l'idolatrie commise autour d'icelle et de l'authorité de la parole de Dieu et des traditions humaines, avec un avertissement de Pierre Viret* (Re-ed., Genève: J. G. Fick, 1865 ed.; Genève: J. Rivery, 1560); Pierre Viret, *De la source et de la différence et convenance de la vielle et nouvelle idolatrie et des vrayes et fausses images et reliques et du seul vray médiateur* (Genève: 1547); F. M. Burgy, "Iconcoclasm et Réforme chez les chroniques de Genève et du Pays de Vaud," *Nos Monuments d'Art et d'Histoire* 35 (1984): 323–330.

[39] Cf. HE, Vol. I, pp. 696–714; H. Klipffel, op. cit., pp. 173 ff.

in opposition to the decision of the 787 Council of Nicea called by the Empress Irene.[40]

The following is the statement of the Reformed pastors, submitted at the session on February 11.

[The Reformed Statement on Images,
St. Germain-en-Laye, 11 Feb. 1562]

Since the explicit Word of God completely condemns all use of images, when it comes to serving them inwardly or outwardly, we cannot in good conscience depart from such an explicit commandment of God and approve what is explicitly prohibited.

We also see that by the same commandment of God—as it was observed by the church of Israel, by the apostles and by their successors for four hundred years and then some—images are not to be collected either in temples or other places where the faithful gather to serve God, because experience shows us vividly that people have never used images well.

For these reasons, we pray that God will abolish images entirely from the midst of the churches of Christians, and that he will give zeal and power to the king, our sovereign lord, to get rid of images completely, following the example of the good king Hezekiah.

Nevertheless, if it pleases the king to tolerate images longer and to understand from us how we could, in that case, come together with those of a contrary opinion, we beg his majesty to grant us the following points.

First, that the following kinds of illicit images be equally eliminated: those of the Trinity, of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit; those which are of wanton design like most images of virgins; those profane ones, like those of animals and other images, made according to human pleasure.

Next, that equally to be eliminated are those images which are in the streets and places where they are served as much as those which are in churches.

Next, that those images which are left be taken from altars and other places where people are accustomed to bow to them and be placed in such areas and places where one cannot easily continue in this superstition.

Next, that the people be explicitly and diligently warned that no offering of wax or money or anything else is to be made to such images (and, if such offering is made, that it is not received or acknowledged) and that

[40] F. Boespflug and N. Lossky, eds., *Nicée II (787–1987): Douze siècles d'images religieuses* (Paris: Cerf, 1987). An interesting part of the history of the Carlolingian stand on images is the sixteenth-century republication of the *Libri Caroli* by the reforming Roman Catholic du Tillet of Meaux.

> in general no adoration whatsoever—be it interior or exterior, simple or relative (such as bowing before them, visiting them on a pilgrimage, burning incense before them, crowning them, touching them as devotion, vowing and praying by them)—is to be made to such images or before them.
>
> And as regards the cross made of wood or other material: although we know it has been used since Constantine the Great, nevertheless observing the Word of God and what the church practiced for such a long time during her original purity [durant sa première pureté], and considering that the worst superstition is committed at the place of the cross, we cannot tolerate the cross any more than we can other representations and images, and we are content to gaze upon Christ and his passion depicted in a living way in his Holy Word [dépeinte au vif en sa sainte parole], as Paul speaks of it writing to the Galatians.
>
> The foregoing being presupposed, if it nonetheless please his majesty the King still to retain images for a certain time[41]—although we desire more, namely the occasion when all superstition shall be removed, all the while hoping that God will more and more strengthen the King—our judgment would be, so long as the rest were agreed to, that would not prevent those who disagree on other things from coming together and assembling in one place.

This last paragraph is an interesting way of leaving the door open for further consultations. It says, in effect, that we have made our position clear and on it we will not compromise; at the same time, a decision by the King to follow another policy for a season will not keep us from discussing this and other matters. The barb in even this opening is the phrase "so long as the rest were agreed to." Does that mean the rest of the conditions desired by the Reformed pastors, or does it mean the rest of the provisions suggested by the median position—if used for an interim condition—taken by the moderate Roman Catholic party? I take the phrase to mean the former, not the latter, so that what appears to be an opening in this last paragraph is really intended to be a diplomatic way for the Reformed to make clear that they will not bear the onus of preventing further assemblies called by the court.

We are going to consider the Reformed theology of images when we evaluate Calvin's treatment of them. This summary, given at St. Germain-en-Laye, is consistent with his mature position and draws upon it. Nonetheless, it is important to note several features of this statement in a preliminary way.

First, part of the statement is cast as a sort of working draft for what the Reformed hoped for in a royal decree. Provisions are carefully spelled out for

[41] This phrase—"s'il plaît à la majesté du Roi de les tenir pour quelque temps" [AN G8*588, p. 37]—is not in de Bèze (HE, Vol. I, p. 449) though it is retained by Klipffel (op. cit., p. 175).

the conditions under which such and such observance might be allowed. It has the tone of laying down the law, or at least of helping the King lay down the law, as much as the majority of the Roman Catholics of the Sorbonne wanted the King to do for their side. It is surely written from the standpoint of persons who think they have a strong position at the court—and who, of course, are sure they have a strong position in the eyes of God, court or no court.

Second, careful attention is given to what the Reformed would temporarily settle for if the King should not move to abolish all use of images right away. The minimal, interim, conditions spelled out here already constitute a sweeping reform. It would be a reform whose extent matched much—not all, but a great deal—of what the moderate Roman Catholic party—d'Espence and his group—sought. It went, however, further than what this moderate, reforming Roman Catholic party sought: according to this Reformed statement, even a plain cross had no place in worship. If agreement were seriously sought and further discussion taken seriously, the statement's language about the cross is almost as ill-timed as de Bèze's 9 September 1561 statement about the distance of Christ's humanity (not just body) from us by virtue of the ascension. "The worst superstition is committed at the place of the cross" (the Reformed phrase) is language hardly calculated to be acceptable even to the moderate party. Still, clearly the interim provisions were meant to appeal to the court which was seen to favor the moderate Roman Catholics. They were not even slightly tailored to take into consideration the objections of the traditionalist Roman Catholic party, who wanted to refer such matters, anyway, to Trent.

Third, it is worth noting the material the Reformed used in making their case. They appeal, of course, primarily to scripture, and within it primarily to the way the "church of Israel" observed God's commandment about images. That is, the history of the church—and this is consistently the Reformed position—begins with God's covenant with the people of the Old Testament, with whom those of the New are in continuity. The Reformed also appeal, however, to early periods of the church since the apostles. There is assumed to be a period—the first—of the Church's purity. The Reformed pastors at St. Germain-en-Laye, however, make an additional and highly significant appeal to another source for their argument. They appeal to "our clear experience," which is not seen as contrary to (or an addition to) but as a confirmation of the point made by the arguments from scripture and church history. This appeal to experience of human behavior (not experience of the benefits of the gospel, or experience of Christ, or experience of God's powers—which language is already frequently used by Calvin and others) is already in place here. The proportion given this factor and its relation to scripture and to church history will become a matter of the great significance in the subsequent development of pietism.

Fourth, the positive content of their presentation—what they are strongly in favor of, as the saving alternative to the superstition they associate with the use of images—is neatly summarized in the view that we are to be content with gazing on Christ and his passion as painted for us alive in his holy Word. As we shall see, this is Calvin's point: images are not simply against God's commandment—they are also utterly superfluous to, and actually detract from, where God reveals himself to us—in the Word. The Word does not mean just scripture, though there is no true Word that is not tied to scripture. The Word is also the right preaching and the sacraments rightly administered, both of which are ways Christ, the Eternal Word of God joined to the human condition by the incarnation, grows ever more and more in that union which he has with believers by the bond of the Holy Spirit.[42]

Fifth, the repeated use of the word *service* is not accidental. It is the word that the Reformed pastors used to designate what was for them essentially a single act of worship and devotion and obedience. In using this one term, the Reformed pastors were rejecting the distinction made between veneration and adoration, whether those—adoration or veneration—be directed to saints, images, or God. According to the Reformed, it was idolatrous to *serve* anyone or anything except the one, true, living, triune God revealed in Jesus Christ. According to the Roman Catholics, such a collapsing of distinctions was completely misleading. For them, honoring saints and using images were means of focusing their worship which is directed only to the one true God. For them, attacking the means of worshipping the true God is tantamount to attacking right worship of the true God.

The Majority Roman Catholic Report

By the time of the Colloquy at St. Germain-en-Laye, there had already occurred a great deal of iconoclasm in the name of the reform of the church and a great deal of passionate opposition to the fanatical destruction of images. The majority Roman Catholic position aligns itself with those who viewed with horror those who would eliminate images. This position appealed to prelates and doctors who considered images to be the book by which the gospel was available to simple, uneducated people. The majority report is, in this respect, not an innovation dealing with an admitted problem, but an up-dating

[42] Nugent is only partially correct in his uncharacteristically exaggerated comment on the exclusion of the cross from use of images: "In general, the Huguenot would find God revealed only in the Bible [That is incorrect.] instead of icons [That part is correct.] Apart from the Bible, the sensible and the sacred were separate [That is incorrect to the highest degree.]" (Nugent, op. cit., p. 198).

and application of the position taken already by the Synod of Paris with regard to images in 1528.

The following is the position of the majority of the Roman Catholic bishops and theologians presented to the court on February 11.

[Declaration on Images
The Majority Roman Catholic Report
St. Germain-en-Laye, February, 1562]

To make and to have images of Jesus Christ and of saints, and to put them in the temples, is not against God's commandment.

To venerate and to honor images directing the honor to the one who is represented by them, according to the tradition of the church, is neither superstition nor idolatry and does not go against Holy Scripture which prohibits only idolatry.

To present oneself before the image of Jesus Christ in adoring him who is represented by it, as St. Gregory says, and also to bow and genuflect before images of saints and to make other outward signs of decent reverence, is an act of devotion and piety and not idolatry and superstition.

Likewise, to burn incense, to light candles, to make vows and offering to God in front of images of our Savior and of saints collected in the churches, to sing hymns and songs to the honor of God and the worthwhile memory of the saints in honoring and beseeching them, is something accustomed in the catholic church and approved by the opinion of the holy fathers.

To carry in processions the cross and relics in memory of the saints, as was done in the time of St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, is praiseworthy and religious.

As regards an image and painting of the Holy Trinity, although God in three persons is unbounded and unrepresentable [incompréhensible et non figurable] Spirit, still one should not find it bad to paint or otherwise to represent the signs and figures in which, scripture tells us, God appeared and was manifest to people.

To raise and maintain Christian people in the faith of the article concerning the Holy Trinity, which is the principle foundation of the Christian religion, paintings, images and stories about the mystery of our redemption are useful, as they are in instructing and confirming also other articles of our faith, like that of the nativity, the passion, resurrection and ascension.

Moreover it is good to retain the use of images for the benefit and usefulness they bring: in instructing the people in the benefits and graces which we have received from Christ and to represent good and salutary examples of the saints in order thereby to give God the glory,

so that we might be imitators of their virtues and by the same means we might be stirred up to take delight in God, to amend our lives, and to devotion, both honoring them and calling them to help us by being our intercessors towards God.

At the same time we do not want to deny that it could happen that certain abuses occur, against the teaching and intention of the Church. Thus it would be an intolerable abuse to consider images as having on their own some divinity or power, for which they ought to be honored or venerated. And although it is a laudable thing to go in devotion to the churches in memory of the saints–because God, according to his good pleasure and unsearchable providence sometimes shows us power and operates more especially in one place than another and by one means more than another–nevertheless to run to one image and have more veneration for it than for another, to prefer one image over another because it is of more valuable material or of more beautiful form, or because it is newer or because it is older, or because it is better presented or more skillfully portrayed–such preference of one image over another is an abuse and is superstition.

It is an abuse to place any confidence in images, as the gentiles did towards their idols.

It is an abuse to make images, or to paint them, in a shameful, dishonest form which is inappropriate to the life and integrity of the saints whom they represent.

It is also an intolerable abuse to invent and circulate false miracles and other kinds of imposture.

And to reform such abuses and others, it seems to us that a most expedient way is that by frequent preaching and exhortations the people are to be taught about these things, and also by showing them that another honor is due Jesus Christ than is given to his saints when we honor them by viewing their images, and consequently they are to be prayed to differently–namely, we are to call upon our Lord as the one who is the author of every good, our redeemer and savior, whereas we call on the saints as intercessors to ask of God that which is lacking us by the means of his dear son Jesus-Christ, and this is the usage of the Church in its prayers, addressing them to God in remembering the saints and finishing with Jesus Christ.[43]

It is also necessary to instruct the people that when they pray they should not stop at the image but at the one who is represented by the image, referring everything to God and to the one represented by the image.

[43] ". . . et [s'addresser] aux saints comme intercesseurs, pour impetrer de Dieu ce qui nous défaut par le moyen de son cher fils Jésus-Christ . . . les [priers] addressant à Dieu sous la mémoire des saints et finissants par Jésus-Christ."

> Furthermore it is not permissible for any private person whosoever to erect or have erected certain images without the authority of the bishop. And it is not permitted to acknowledge any miracles without legitimate proof and approval of the bishop.
>
> It is also forbidden to remove or break images, because doing so is manifestly against the honor of God and the saints and is to the detriment of the Christian religion.
>
> But the chief means for defining and determining the present subject, and for dealing with all other things concerning the Christian faith, and for the universal reformation of the Church, is to refer it to the Apostolic Holy See and the General Council.[44]

The eighth paragraph accurately shows the contradictions which seemed to the Reformed to be inherent in the majority Roman Catholic position. This paragraph is not to be dismissed as a slip; its authors are accurately presenting a customary teaching.

On the one hand, images are said to be useful pedagogically, to remember the lives of saints and encourage the faithful to emulate the saints' lives. This is the familiar argument advanced by Gregory the Great, which shows up in different forms in the defense of images, and is also held by irenic figures like d'Espence: images are the Bible of the illiterate.[45]

[44] AN G8*588; Klipffel, op. cit., pp. 176–179.

[45] Gregory's original comparison underwent various adaptations, and the comparison is such a common one that we cannot always be sure its use can be traced only to Gregory. Gregory the Great's (590–604) judgment was prompted by the report that bishop Serenus of Marseilles found that some sacred pictures were being worshipped in churches in his diocese and therefore had ordered their removal. Gregory wrote two letters to him, and they contain what functioned as a guiding principle for subsequent treatment of images on two points: that images were like books for the unlettered, and that images were not to be broken in any event. The images should be preserved and the people prohibited from adoring them. In Gregory's words,

> Furthermore, we declare that it has come to our attention that you, Brother, seeing certain adorers of images, broke and threw down these same images. And we commend you indeed for your zeal, lest anything made with human hands be adored; but we declare that you ought not to have broken these images. For a picture is introduced into a church that those who are ignorant of letters may at least read by looking at the wall what they cannot read in books. You, Brother, should therefore have both preserved the images and prohibited the people from adoring them, so that those who are ignorant of letters might have wherewith to gather a knowledge of history and that the people might in no way sin by adoring a picture. (Cited in W. R. Jones, pp. 78–79 of *IAW*, from MPL 77: 1027–1028. See note 11 on ICM, p. 105.)

An interesting variation of this appears in Bonaventura. He goes beyond Gregory's argument and adds a three-fold alliteration on why images are useful: "propter simplicium ruditatem, propter affectuum tarditatem, and propter memoriae labilitatem" (Jone's reference is to Bonaventura's Commentary on Liber III Sent., IX, a.1, q.ii, in L. M. Belloe and Perantoni, eds., *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera Theologica Selecta*, vol. 3 [Quaracchi-Firenze: Colleg. d. S. Bonaventura, 1934–1949], 194). Bonaventura exalts the visual sense above hearing as the best way

On the other hand, the paragraph adds: "both honoring them and calling them to help us by being our intercessors towards God." The difference between these two positions is more than a tension; the document simply places in juxtaposition contrary views about intercession. That juxtaposition also shapes the thirteenth and fourteenth paragraphs. Jesus Christ and the saints are to be prayed to differently: ". . . we are to call upon our Lord as the one who is the author of every good, our Redeemer and Savior, whereas we call on the saints as intercessors to ask of God that which is lacking us by the means of his dear son Jesus-Christ . . ." The people are to be instructed that when they pray ". . . they should not stop at the image but at the one who is represented by the image, and referring everything to God and to the one represented by the image." In this last provision, the image referred to may be a saint, not necessarily Christ.

The extent to which the Reformed position needed to be a firm one is indicated by this position paper of the majority Roman Catholic party. If the Reformed position taken at St. Germain-en-Laye sounds too categorical to the modern ear, it is worth remembering both the excesses of the cults that popularly developed around images and the reluctance of the majority of the Roman Catholic theologians and bishops to correct these excesses. The majority Roman Catholic position paper is mainly a defense against charges that images are frequently abused, though some abuses are admitted and identified. It claims that what is wrong is not primarily the existing practice with images but the misunderstanding of those who oppose the use of images.

Its authors are concerned about preserving what they understood to be the pastoral responsibility that the teaching magisterium had for the simple believer. Images were important to the religion of the people. Moreover, one cannot discount the genuine form of religion among the majority of Roman Catholic bishops and priests who knew that even the best practices were always accompanied with abuses, which abuses did not, however, mean the rejection of the practices themselves. Their genuine form of religion had a large place for the mediatorial function of images. On the other hand, their genuine form of religion had absolutely no place for what appeared to them (and often

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for our emotions to be roused and for us to remember; in this way images are advantageous for everyone, not just for the illiterate:

> They [images] were introduced because of the sluggishness of the affections, so that men who are not aroused to devotion when they hear with the ear about those things which Christ has done for us will at the least be inspired when they see the same things in figures and pictures, present, as it were, to their bodily eyes. For our emotion is aroused more by what is seen than by what is heard. They were introduced on account of the transitory nature of memory, because those things which are only heard fall into oblivion more easily than those things which are seen.

was) the fanatic arrogance of supposed reformers of the church whose rampages destroyed images which were often the only tangible comfort that many struggling Christians had. The protective side of the pastoral care of the teachers and prelates was thoroughly aroused by the iconoclastic excesses that were carried out in the name of church reform.

That there should be such arbitrary claims to church reform – including reform by eliminating the use of images – reinforced in these bishops and the majority of doctors at the Sorbonne the reason for looking to the General Council called by the Pope. The court of France was, for them, entirely too swayed by parties that would define and carry out supposed church reform along far too nationally determined lines. That is why the main message of the position paper of the majority at St. Germain-en-Laye was that no decisive agreement was to be reached there, since the matter, like others pertaining to reform, should be referred to the next session of the Council of Trent.

The Minority Roman Catholic Report

Here we are mainly concerned with comparing the majority Roman Catholic position with that taken by the irenic or moderate Roman Catholic party whose chief spokesperson was Claude d'Espence. De Bèze, in the *Histoire Ecclésiastique* assigns it simply to the party of five "most learned" of the Roman Catholic theologians, not especially to d'Espence. The five, as de Bèze lists them, were d'Espence, Boutillier, Picherel, Salignac, and Montluc the bishop of Valence.[46] According to de Bèze, these five differed from the majority of Roman Catholics at the Colloquy in agreeing that there should not be images of God whatsoever and that statues were to be removed from altars, only leaving the cross there (on altars). Here is the statement of that group of the moderate, reforming Roman Catholic theologians and bishops.

[On the Reform of the Abuse of Images
A Roman Catholic Statement by d'Espence and Others
St. Germain-en-Laye, February, 1562]

First, following the teaching of Augustine, it is more necessary to uproot abuse from the heart of people than from temples and other external places. To accomplish this, bishops, curates, and other pastors must often warn the people that images were received in the church in order to instruct simple persons and to represent what our Savior did for us, so that we give glory and praise and thanksgiving to him. Images were received in the church also to remind us what the saints did and

[46] HE, Vol. I, p. 435.

endured while in this world to bear witness to the purity and sincerity of our religion. The people need also to be told that by such representations of the saints we are admonished to give thanks to God for having used people who are humans like ourselves and for having chosen them, honored them, and made them participants in his glory. By them we are also admonished to imitate their faith and their good life. Having been given the reasons why images were received in the church, the people should also be exhorted not to use the images for other ends than were intended by the church, and, as a consequence, none is to make, or have an image made, without the permission of the bishop.

So that this important article not be left to the indiscretion of those who by ignorance or for some other reason would abuse it, it is necessary to establish and fix a certain rule about the images by which everyone knows their proper use. This established ruling needs to be done by the King's ordinance with the church's authority: individuals are not allowed to take these matters into their own hands—otherwise procedures will be brought against them as breakers of the King's ordinances and laws.

To give the order which is necessary, it is our wish that it be agreed that any image and painting of the Trinity be removed from churches and from all other public and private locations. Obviously, such depiction is prohibited by scripture, by the councils of the church and by several persons well attested for their doctrine and their holy life; images of the Trinity were there only because of the connivance and laziness of pastors. We say that the same applies to many images made in lascivious, dishonest and strange form, as well as to images which represent saints whose legend has been rejected by the church as apocryphal.

It is also our wish that what has not been received by explicit ordinance of the church be abolished and completely removed, like crowning images, swearing by them, carrying them in processions, and giving them promises and offerings.

Now as to whether or not images are adored, since collecting them on altars, giving them candles, burning incense before them, greeting them, and bowing down before them constitute one part of the adoration which is made out of respect for religion, we wish that all images, except the simple cross, would be removed from the altars and put in such places in the parishes where one can no longer adore them, kiss them, clothe them, crown them with flowers, put hats on them, offer them vows, or carry them about on shoulders or on sticks in the street or in the temple—a practice which was not even defended by the council held at Paris, chapter three: Omnium baculorum delationem confratibus et aliis quibuscumque tam extra quam intra ecclesiam prohibendam.[47]

[47] AN G8*588, p. 38; HE, Vol. I, pp. 436–437, does not have the reference to the third article of the council held at Paris.

"Except for the simple cross"–that phrase covers the main difference separating the practical position of this minority Roman Catholic party from the practical position of the Reformed pastors. I say "practical position" because there are other differences–such as the weight given the authority of the church in these matters and the role given the bishop in the reform of abuses–between how these two groups come to their views on images and on what is to be done with the images that are removed from the altars. Nonetheless, at St. Germain-en-Laye we have from this reforming Roman Catholic party a strong program for and argument for the reform of the abuses of images–and for permitting the retention of the simple cross as part of right worship.

Their position is far closer to the Reformed position than it is to the position of the majority of Roman Catholic bishops and theologians at St. Germain-en-Laye. It was, in fact, so reforming a position that it rendered its authors seriously suspect by the theological faculty of the Sorbonne. D'Espence later had to defend himself against the charge that his views on images were the same as those of the heretical Protestants. An interesting sequel to this is provided by a note added by the editor of AN G8*588 telling of d'Espence's having been presented to the Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne later that year, on August 1, 1562. The faculty decided to deliberate whether or not d'Espence should be admitted into their assembly before he retracted "the article which he had presented on images at St. Germain in the name of the bishops of Seéz and Valence and in his own name." It was decided that he would be obliged to make such a retraction. Apparently Cardinal Lorraine, d'Espence's protector, intervened and d'Espence was "exhorted by the Dean, in the name of the faculty, to compose a small treatise on the cult of images, in order to remove at least the scandal which might have caused the rumors." D'Espence's reply is an astute challenge.

> Sirs, I thank you for your remonstrance. I shall certainly offer, when I might have the leisure, to write something on images. But I may well fear that the result might not meet your expectations, because I have never found in St. Ambrose, in St. Augustine, in St. Jerome, in St. Gregory, "to honor," "to worship," "to venerate," "to adore" applied to images–except for the cross. Nevertheless I offer, as I have always offered, to sign the articles of the faculty against Luther, and notably the seventh which is framed in these terms: "Nor is it to be doubted that it is a good work to genuflect before images of the crucifixion and of Blessed Mary and of the saints in order to pray to Christ and the saints."[48]

[48] AN G8*588, p. 40. The seventh article ("Nec ullo modo addubitandum est quin genuflectere coram imaginibus Crucifixi, Beatae Mariae et Sanctorum ad rogandum Christum et Sanctos, sit bonum opus.") referred to is in the action of the Faculty of theology of the Sorbonne, the same body d'Espence is addressing.

There is irony in the Sorbonne's condemnation of those who would doubt that such genuflection, to pray to Christ and the saints, is a "good work." Luther uses "good work" in a double sense, the activity of faith of a freely justified sinner, and the activity to which some merit is thought to be attached. On Luther's terms, kneeling at prayer is a good work in the first sense—not the second. D'Espence may or may not have seen the irony in the way the theological faculty had framed its seventh article condemning what was conceived to be Luther's error. In any event, that article treats such genuflection as a way of praying to Christ—*and* of praying to the saints. The genuflection, however, is not for honoring, worshipping, venerating, adoring images. D'Espence was correct: his view was not that of the Protestants, nor was it the view of the majority Roman Catholic position at St. Germain-en-Laye.

His views had increasingly less space as the extreme positions on either side grew after the massacre at Vassy. D'Espence's reply takes place 1 August 1562—ten years before another event that started in Paris not at all far from the place where d'Espence's reply was made. St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572, is the tragic culmination of the failure of, and the increasing elimination of, the positions on which Catherine de Médici, a decade earlier, had pinned much of her hopes for a national reforming initiative and for the role of the French court in that reforming initiative.

It is no surprise that the Sorbonne's Faculty of Theology opposed a moderate position. We may well ask, however, how are we to account for the fact that the Reformed pastors at St. Germain-en-Laye played so well into the hands of those who wanted all such disputes referred to Trent and who were for keeping images but eliminating Protestants and Roman Catholics like d'Espence?[49] Of course, the Reformed may have been primarily concerned about retaining that international support which was sympathetic to their cause, and they may have counted heavily on the strength of persons like Condé and the Châtillons. That way of putting the question, however, implies a priority to political and diplomatic consideration which is partly anachronistic. The Reformed most likely took the position they did, finally not because it was calculated to secure for them a political advantage, but because

[49] De Ruble frames the same question differently, but suggests that the answer is Cardinal Lorraine's successful maneuvering to prove to the Court that the Reformed would not be reliable allies. "Contrairement à leur attitude des premiers jours, les reformes acceptèrent la dissolution [of the Colloquy] sans protester. Il semble même, à la raideur de leurs reponses, qu'ils aient voulu précipiter le dénouement. Ce changement était l'ouvrage de cardinal de Lorraine. Despence ne fait pas mention [in his accounts of the Colloquy] des manoeuvres de son maître, peut-être parce qu'il les ignorait" (de Ruble, op. cit., p. 46).

they were convinced that relative political security would come and peace would be maintained in France only when they and the King attended to the main thing–promoting the right worship of God. On this matter of images, the Reformed position simply did not see that there was room for "the reform of the abuse of images." Reform in connection with images was their elimination. It is to the theological and anthropological foundations for this position that we turn in the next section.

III

Reform by Eliminating the Use of Images

We have noted the Reformed position on images presented by de Bèze at St. Germain-en-Laye. We have noted the majority and minority Roman Catholic positions that resulted from discussions among themselves and with the Reformed pastors. We now turn to look more carefully at the Reformed position. We do so by considering the theology of Calvin on images which had a major influence on the Reformed doctrine and with which the Reformed position at St. Germain-en-Laye was fully consistent. We shall look at Calvin's teaching under the following heads: the function of the commandment for the true church; the immeasurability of God; the living Word versus images; exceptions and the limits of accommodation.

The Commandment and the True Church

Calvin's most coherent, brief argument on the question of images in church reform appears in book one of the final edition of the *Institutes*, chapters 10, 11 and 12.[50] These chapters occupy a strategic position in Calvin's argument, and their position sheds light on what is for Calvin the central issue in the

[50] Dealing with images is so linked with reform, that Calvin's treatment of them appears throughout the course of the reform in Geneva and elsewhere. See, for example, "A Refutation of Arguments Proposed in Favor of the Worship of Images," translated from *CR* 38: 193–197 by B. Farley, and dated by the *CR* editors to 6 Feb. 1562 and addressed to Madame Beza. Note the date and that of the Colloquy on Images at St. Germain-en-Laye. See J. Leith, "John Calvin's Polemic against Idolatry" in *Soli Deo Gloria: New Testament Studies in Honor of William Childs Robinson*, J. M. Richards, ed. (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1968), 111–124; Hughes O. Old, "John Calvin and the Prophetic Criticism of Worship" in *Calvin Studies III*, John Leith, ed. (Richmond, Va.: Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1986), 73–87; and Carlos M. N. Eire, "'True Piety Begets True Confession': John Calvin's Attack on Idolatry" in *Calvin Studies IV*, W. Stacey Johnson, ed. (Davidson, N.C.: Davidson Calvin Colloquium, 1988), 105–133.

whole discussion. These chapters follow Calvin's treatment of the scriptures' necessity for rightly knowing God and self and precede Calvin's treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity. The issue is not whether or not an image has any role to play in the life of believers. The issue is which image functions rightly, and which images function to divide the honor due entirely to the one true God, thereby diverting people's attention away from the Word by whom alone the true image of God is to be identified.

That is the issue behind the various charges and counter-charges of "idolatry." No one on the Reformed side or on the Roman Catholic side was volunteering to be labeled an idolater. Each side sincerely considered the other's position subject to the charge of idolatry. One has to take seriously the Roman Catholic counter-charge that with the Reformed, iconoclasm (or just an absence of images as a supposed guarantee of pure worship) had become a far more deceptive and not too subtle form of idolatry. After all, much of what passed as purifying the church actually functioned as a false scandal, fearfully dividing the body of Christ over a matter on which evangelical Roman Catholics already agreed there was necessary reform. What had to be sorted out, what had to be argued, was still the central question that preoccupies Calvin in this section, namely how is the one true God rightly known and rightly worshipped and served (both actions being inherent in the right knowing of God) and what consequently constitutes the right knowing of self in relation to the one living, triune God.

When Calvin speaks of "true religion" it is practically synonymous with "true devotion." That is also the way his adversaries use the term. The only question is what are the conditions obtained where true religion flourishes. That is the question which Calvin addresses throughout his life and which is the immediate occasion for writing *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. It was taken for granted by Calvin and the other magisterial reformers and counter-reformers that the true ruler would not long persecute the true church, that is, would not persecute the people among whom true religion (pure devotion, right service) flourished. For Calvin, the true church is comprised of those who hear and live by the Word of God as it is rightly proclaimed through right preaching and right administration of the sacraments. Where this occurs, men and women are moved by the Word and Spirit to accept and rely on their freely given justification by grace alone. They are freed from relying on all form or works righteousness, and on all substitute mediators – that is, anything or anyone other than the one Mediator Jesus Christ.

A special role is given in Calvin's theology to the third use of the law, and that includes explicitly the Decalogue.[51] The second commandment pro-

[51] On the relation of law and the Decalogue in Calvin, see Barbara Pitkin, "Imitation of David: David as a Paradigm for Faith in Calvin's Exegesis of the Psalms," *SCJ* 24, no. 4 (1993):

hibiting "graven images" is binding not just to order society rightly (first use) by guarding against idolatry, and not just to drive us to Christ (second use) by exposing our repeated proclivity to make idols for ourselves and others. The second commandment is also binding on believers (third use) who, freed by the Gospel, are guided in the practice of that Christian freedom. The second commandment is given us by God to keep consciences free from falling back into the servitude of works righteousness, the servitude of supposing we can merit something by attending to the honoring of images. Calvin's warning against compromising the force of the second commandment is not born out of a rigid adherence to a ceremonial provision of the Decalogue. It is born of his understanding of the freedom to which the gospel moves men and women. Ignoring or minimizing the second commandment is to fall back into the bondage against which Paul warns the Galatians. The second commandment is a graciously given guard against the servitude that sets in to the extent that we are diverted from what has been completely offered and extended by the gracious God whose glory shines forth in the face of Christ Jesus.[52]

It is important to get this straight before we turn to the obvious point that Calvin is opposed to the use of images because the second commandment is thus opposed. The commandment is not compelling because it belongs to a venerable collection of statutes or because it is found in a book supposed to be faultless. The commandment is compelling because of the steadfast love of the One who gives the decalogue. The commandment is to be obeyed because of the nature of the covenanting God who stands behind his Word—in this case, who stands behind his ten words that comprise the decalogue. Each of these ten words is a form of the Word of God which brings about that which it announces. That Word is powerfully effective ("efficace") because of the identity of the One who accomplishes what he sends forth.[53] Graven images are not to be created, because the reality sought by such construction has already been created by the steadfastly-loving God. In choosing to be Israel's God, he created Israel into being his people. The identity, the very ex-

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843–863; John Hesselink, "Law and Gospel or Gospel and Law" in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of John Calvin*, R. V. Schnucker, ed. (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1988), 13–32; and William Klempa, "John Calvin on Natural Law" in *Calvin Studies IV*, op. cit., 1–24.

[52] See ICM, 1,15,4 where Calvin argues that the image of God in which Adam and Eve were created is now known from its restoration in Christ. See James Torrance, "Interpreting the Word by the Light of Christ or the Light of Nature? Calvin, Calvinism, and Barth" in *Calviniana*, op. cit., 255–267.

[53] See J. T. McNeill, "The Significance of the Word of God for Calvin," *CH* 28 (1959): 131–147.

istence, of the people of God entails the practice of a particular kind of obedience. It is the obedience of freely adopted sons and daughters, not the obedience of fearful servants.[54] It is free obedience that holds to the explicitly given commandment of this graciously covenanting God.

What I have just described—the evangelical context in which the commandment has claims on the lives of persons and is the reason for their obedience—is the issue in Calvin's linking the Word and the Spirit. Calvin holds to the orthodox teaching that the Eternal Word and the Eternal Spirit are eternally united, and so, in revelation, the one is never experienced without the other. Scripture would be just a dead letter were it not for the Holy Spirit who moves us to hear and embrace as God's Word to us what is written. By the same token, those err who have recourse to their private so-called illuminations "when, carelessly forsaking and bidding farewell to God's Word, they, no less confidently than boldly, seize upon whatever they may have conceived while snoring."[55]

> Certainly a far different sobriety befits the children of God, who just as they see themselves, without the Spirit of God bereft of the whole light of truth, so are not unaware that the Word is the instrument by which the Lord dispenses the illumination of his Spirit to believers. For they know no other Spirit than him who dwelt and spoke in the apostles,

[54] See *Institutes* 3,19,5 (ICM, p. 837; OS 4, p. 285) where Calvin contrasts the joyous and spontaneous obedience of children with the fearful and calculating obedience of servants. It is to such Christian freedom that the Word and Spirit persuade the conscience. See Peter Rodolphe, "Rhétorique et Prédication selon Calvin" *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse* 55 (1975); and David Willis, "Persuasion in Calvin's Theology: Implications for His Ethics" in *Calvin and Christian Ethics*, Peter de Klerk, ed. (Grand Rapids: Calvin Studies Society, 1987), 83–94. The particular way Calvin treats this persuasion cannot be separated from his humanism, for which see such studies as Quirinus Breen, *John Calvin: A Study in French Humanism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1931); Jean Boisset, *Sagesse et Sainteté dans la pensée de Jean Calvin: Essai sur l'humanisme du réformateur français*, Vol. 71, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Religieuses (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959); William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Egil Grislis "Calvin's Use of Cicero in the Institutes I, 1–5: A Case Study in Theological Method," *Archive for Reformation History* 62 (1971): 5–37; Francis Montgomery Higman, *The Style of John Calvin in His French Polemical Writings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); David Willis, "Rhetoric and Responsibility in Calvin's Theology" in *The Context of Contemporary Theology*, A. J. McKelway and E. D. Willis, eds. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1974), 43–63; and David E. Demson, "The Image of Calvin in Recent Research" in *In Honor of John Calvin, 1509–1564*, E. Furcha, ed. (Montreal: McGill University, 1987), 367–383.

[55] *Institutes* 1,9,3; ICM, p. 96; OS 3, p. 84. It is improbable that Calvin's warnings against false prophets, which he already finds in the scriptures, were not reinforced by the widespread reaction against the excesses of the Zwickau prophets, for which see George Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 44–58.

> and by whose oracles they are continually recalled to the hearing of the Word.[56]

This means that, say one has some sort of insight or even a dream that seems to him or her a revelation, if it goes contrary to what is prohibited in scripture, then it is not of the Spirit.

The scriptures are not, however, to be placed in opposition to the prophets. It is not, for Calvin, the case that one has just to do with the scriptures and the Spirit to determine what is to be obeyed and how. Calvin insists on the connection not simply between Spirit and Word but on the connection between the office of the prophet and rightly hearing the Word by the power of the Spirit.[57] The prophets are given by God so we can walk in the way of the law. In commenting on Jeremiah 26:4–5 ("If you will not hearken to me to walk in my law which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets whom I sent unto you . . ."), Calvin says

> . . . It is through the prophets that God adapts to our need whatever might seem to us remote and of no concern to us. Surely since God gave his law and then added to it his prophets, it is obvious that anyone who rejects God's prophets puts no real confidence in God's law. So today those who scorn to go to school to Christ and to train themselves in listening to the Word, really mock God himself and judge both the law and the prophets–and even the gospel itself–as without value.[58]

The office of prophet continues to guide believers, for the pastors and teachers and evangelists are the means through which the law is adapted and interpreted for believers, not so they take the law less seriously, but so they understand the law and see how it in fact is to be obeyed. The dynamics of the authority of the law for Calvin is grasped only when this connection between law and prophets and between scripture and Spirit is noted. It is the reinter-

[56] *Institutes* 1,9,3; ICM, p. 96; OS 3, pp. 84, 85.

[57] See his arrangement of the office of the ministry into the permanent and temporary offices, and what constitutes the office of the pastor or evangelist or prophet or teacher in *Institutes* 4,3,4–5; ICM, pp. 1056–1058; OS 5, pp. 45–47. On Word and Spirit in relation to forms of the ministry see Walter Kreck, "Wort und Geist bei Calvin" in *Festschrift für Gunther Dehn*, Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed. (Neukirchen: Verlag des Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1957); Brian G. Armstrong, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Calvin's Teaching on the Ministry" in *Calvin and the Holy Spirit*, Peter de Klerk, ed. (Grand Rapids: Calvin Studies Society, 1989), 99–111; Richard Gamble, "Word and Spirit in Calvin" in *Calvin and the Holy Spirit*, Peter de Klerk, ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Calvin Studies Society, 1989), 75–92; Elsie McKee, *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving* (Geneva: Droz, 1984); and David Willis, "Calvin's Theology of Pastoral Care," *Calvin Studies VI*, ed. J. Leith (Davidson, N.C.: Calvin Colloquium, 1992).

[58] Joseph Haroutunian, ed., *Calvin: Commentaries* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958), 82.

preted law, the freshly binding and freeing law, which is to be obeyed. That is the work of the Spirit using the instruments of the prophets. Calvin's hermeneutics, by and large, understands that there are things that are not explicitly provided for in scripture to which the Spirit, ever joined to the Word, may lead the church—but the line is drawn at permitting beliefs or practices that are explicitly prohibited by scripture. The use of images falls, for Calvin, under those things that are explicitly prohibited by scripture.

The Immeasurability of God

We have just seen that the second commandment is to be obeyed because of the steadfast love of the giver of the commandments, who wills thereby to guide the Christian freedom of believers. The second commandment is also important for the truth it contains about the nature of God. The second commandment is a true word of God because its provisions are grounded in the truth of God's identity. The weight Calvin gives to this commandment with the way he interprets it tells us as much about his doctrine of God as it does about his understanding of true worship. Of course, that is the point: true worship and a right doctrine of God are inseparable. Right knowledge of God entails right worship, and vice versa. Graven images of God are prohibited because they would not be of God who cannot be measured. What is depicted by wrought images are measurable bits of human manufacture. The deceived handiworkers put their trust in the works of their own hands. Such measurable objects have convenient qualities. They can be used, replaced, and are good for carrying in processions. By utter contrast, the true God is not controlled by human service, and is the One who graciously carries his people.

Part of Calvin's teaching is just the orthodox understanding that God is immeasurable. Part of his teaching, however, is the conclusion—whose orthodoxy was exactly the issue in the debates of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and the Council of Frankfurt—drawn from God's being immeasurable. Calvin concludes that not only are depictions of God prohibited but there is no place in true worship for images of Christ, or of the saints, or of events that make up sacred narratives. Calvin does indeed make a distinction between images of God and images of other subjects; but that distinction is not sufficient for him to give a positive role to any images, *other than that of the living Word*, in worship. Any other images are false because they do not represent a reality; they are false because they represent an illusion, a deceit.

The connection Calvin sees between the immeasurability of God and the second commandment can be summarized in these two themes: first, that the

immeasurable God and measuring images are simply contraries; and, second, whatever one learns from images about God and about our relation to God is either false or negative . The limit itself may be a *via negativa* for rightly knowing and worshipping God.

As regards the first theme, Calvin expresses the contrariety between God and images in a variety of ways. Here is an adequate example. "God's glory is corrupted by an impious falsehood whenever any form is attached to him. Therefore in the law, after having claimed for himself alone the glory of deity, when he would teach that worship he approves or repudiates, God soon adds, 'You shall not make for yourself a graven image, nor any likeness.'"[59] Commenting on Deuteronomy 4:12–15, Calvin says,

> We see how openly God speaks against all images, that we may know that all who seek visible forms of God depart from him. Of the prophets it is enough to cite only Isaiah who is most emphatic in presenting this. He teaches that God's majesty is sullied by an unfitting and absurd fiction, when the corporeal likeness is made to resemble corporeal matter, the invisible a visible likeness, the spirit an inanimate object, the immeasurable a puny bit of wood or stone or gold [Isa. 40:18–20 and 41:7, 29; 45:9; 46:5–7].[60]

Another passage of scripture which Calvin draws on to interpret the second commandment is that from Acts 17:29, where Paul says, "Since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to judge the Deity to be like gold and silver or a stone, carved by the devising of man."

As regards the second theme (regarding what we learn from images), we see it in Calvin's treatment of Gregory's much quoted view that images are the books of the uneducated. Part of Calvin's reply is that the church needs to educate people so they do not have to have recourse to images. We will return to this objection presently. Here we need to note the other part of his reply. It is that the uneducated do indeed learn from images—but what they learn is false. Habakkuk 2:18 is pressed into service for Calvin on this point, where the prophet says "a molten image is a teacher of falsehood."

> . . . From such statement we must surely infer this general doctrine, that whatever men learn from images is futile, indeed false. . . . The prophets totally condemn the notion, taken as axiomatic by the papists, that images stand in place of books. For the prophets set images over against the true God as contraries that can never agree.[61]

[59] *Institutes* 1,11,1; ICM, p. 100; OS 3, p. 88.
[60] *Institutes* 1,11,2; ICM, p. 101; OS 3, p. 89.
[61] *Institutes* 1,11,5; ICM, p. 105; OS 3, p. 93.

Calvin does make an exception to the last rule. He admits that God from time to time did employ "definite signs."

> God indeed from time to time showed the presence of his majesty by definite signs, so that he might be said to be looked upon face to face. But all the signs that he ever gave forth aptly conformed to his plan of teaching and at the same time clearly told men of his incomprehensible essence. For clouds and smoke and flame [Deut 4:11] although they were symbols of heavenly glory, restrained the minds of all like a bridle placed on them, from attempting to penetrate too deeply.[62]

Calvin says we learn the same thing from the Holy Spirit's appearing under the likeness of a dove, and from the construction of the mercy seat (Exodus 25:17–21) guarded by the cherubim with outstretched wings.

> What, indeed, I beg you, did those paltry little images mean? Solely that images are not suited to represent God's mysteries. For they had been formed to this end, that veiling the mercy seat with their wings they might bar not only human eyes but all the senses from beholding God, and thus correct men's rashness.[63]

Thus, not everthing we learn from images is false. There is a veiling function of those images which were sanctioned in the Old Testament. These images *indirectly* have a usefully contrary function to perform. We learn from images that they do not refer us to the true God. In this way they have a sort of negative symbolic function. They remind us of what and who the living God is not, and honoring them reminds us of what true service of God is not.

What images teach us *directly* is false because they give into–or at least do not correct–that proclivity in humans since the fall to construct images which are the products of their own imagination. It is important to note Calvin's anthropology which helps undergird the other reasons he gives for rejecting images. The origin of images, according to him, is in human nature which is created for God and created to long for God as the Highest Good. Fallen humanity, however, creates idols out of its craving for a physical presence and form of God, lest it cannot believe in him.

> . . . Man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols. After the flood there was a sort of rebirth of the world, but not many years passed before men were fashioning gods according to their pleasure. . . . Man's mind, full as it is of pride and boldness, dares to imagine a god according to its own capacity; as it sluggishly plods, indeed is overwhelmed with

[62] *Institutes* 1,11,3; ICM, p. 102; OS 3, p. 90.
[63] *Institutes* 1,11,3; ICM, p. 102; OS 3, p. 91.

> the crassest ignorance, it conceives an unreality and an empty appearance as God. To these evils a new wickedness joins itself, that man tries to express in his work the sort of God he has inwardly conceived. Therefore the mind begets an idol; the hand gives it birth.[64]

Calvin's thought on this point sheds light on a feature of his aesthetics: Calvin assumes that art represents the sensible. The artist's work is to paint or sculpture images of things and events that are visible and remembered, not that are the product of human imagination. Not only are images of God blasphemous; they are also false art because they are expressions of human imagination about something that is invisible. Making images of God conveys the impression that the true God is visible.

Nowhere, to my knowledge, does Calvin develop the notion that, given humans' image-constructing nature[65] and its idolatrous bent since the fall, there is a positive use of a picture of Christ or even of the cross as focus to displace the false images for which humans hunger. Calvin considers the desire for the physical presence of God an indication of human perversity. For him, the god who would be physically present would be a false god. The exception, of course, is where God accommodates himself to our capacity, above all in the incarnation, but also in the other forms of the Word that confirm believer's union with Christ–scripture, preaching, sacraments. Calvin has complete confidence in the power of the Word, at work by the Holy Spirit through pure preaching and rightly administered sacraments, to displace and correct human nature's needs for other images. For Calvin, and for the Reformed pastors at St. Germain-en-Laye, reform of the church does not entail reform of the abuse of images; it entails the elimination of the use of images, including the plain cross.

If pushed too far and too consistently, Calvin's views would reflect little more than a dependency on the very images he opposes. His strictures are, however, a direct consequence of the way he applies Hilary of Poitier's prin-

[64] *Institutes* 1,11,8; ICM, p. 108; OS 3, pp. 96, 97.

[65] For Calvin's view of human imagination as a factory of idols see the treatment of labyrinth in Calvin's theology in William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), and Constantino V. Riccardi, *Light in the Labyrinth* (San Francisco: Riccardi Publications, 1977). For Calvin's anthropology see Thomas F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (London: Lutterworth, 1952); John Leith, "The Doctrine of the Will in the Institutes of the Christian Religion" in *Reformation Perennis*, B. A. Gerrish, ed. (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1981), 49–66; Jane Dempsey Douglass, "The Image of God in Humanity: A Comparison of Calvin's Teaching in 1536 and 1559" in *In Honor of John Calvin*, op. cit., pp. 175–203; and David Foxgrover, "Self-Examination in John Calvin and Willam Ames" in *Later Calvinism*, Fred W. Graham, ed. (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), 451–469.

ciple that "God is the sole and proper witness of himself."[66] This fundamental assertion of God's self-witness functions differently in different theologians. For Calvin it functions to refer us back to where God's self-witness is, because of sin, alone savingly known, through the Word. Calvin simply does not consider images to be a means of communicating the Word. According to him, that Word comes to us so fully through scriptures and preaching and the sacraments, that to seek it elsewhere is to enable idols to be the focus of our quest for God.

The Focus on the Living Word

The ardor of Calvin's opposition to images is the counterpart to his passionate belief that in the ordinary means of grace God has provided all we need. Wanting more than the ordinary means of grace, such as seeking help through the use of images, is to mistrust God's promises and to diffuse faith. True faith focuses on the one sure image, the one in whom we see even the restoration of the image into which we were created, the one Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ. He is present and is for us through the ministry of the Word in its several forms. For Calvin, "images" are not forms of that ministry of the Word.

One of the great features of Calvin's theology is the varied use he makes of the category of divine accommodation.[67] The true God is the one who freely accommodates to the human condition. The finite is not inherently capable of receiving the being who is God; but the finite, made and sustained by God, becomes the dwelling place and the manifestation of God by the power of the Word by whom all things are made. The revelatory presence of God as God's gracious accommodation affects Calvin's realism about scripture, about preaching, and about sacraments and ministry. Revelation is God's self-accommodation. God shows himself to be the true God by his capacity to render himself to be experienced by humans. According to Calvin's treatment of the relationship between the two Testaments, in chapters six through twelve of book two of the *Institutes*, the substance of the Old and New Testaments is the same, but God accommodates himself differently in the one and the other.[68] Committing God's Word to writing, and to the proclama-

[66] *Institutes* 1,11,1; ICM, p. 100; OS 3, p. 88.

[67] On accommodation, see Ford Lewis Battles, "God was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity," *Interpretation* 31 (1977): 19–38; Edward A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953); and David Wright, "Accommodation in Calvin's Theology" in *Calvin Studies Society, Princeton, 1994*, P. de Klerk, ed. (Grand Rapids: Calvin Studies Society, 1994).

[68] For Calvin's treatment of "the substantial identity of the old and new covenants" and the faith of David, see B. Pitkin, op. cit., pp. 860–863.

tion of human prophets, is due to God's gracious accommodation. Otherwise, in all these instances, we would be overwhelmed by the magnitude, force, and beauty of the glory of God.

One could well expect the argument to extend to images: that they are ways God uses to render the Word, preached and celebrated in the sacrament and written, all the more powerfully reinforced through other senses. Calvin's view of accommodation appears in so many dimensions of his throughout that his not applying it to images is all the more striking. Calvin does not make that move; in fact, as we have seen, the whole weight of his argument is that images, rather than reinforcing the Word preached and experienced through the sacred mysteries, detract from the ordinary means of grace, become substitutes for them, and are one of the main props for a false religion based on merit because they diffuse mediation away from its focus in the one Mediator, Jesus Christ. There is nothing that I know of in Calvin which corresponds to Luther's view that an image or statue should not be a substitute for the preached Word and sacraments but still may be a genuine aid to piety for some people in some circumstances.

In making his argument, Calvin draws on the use of the early church. His periodization is interesting. ". . . If the authority of the ancient church moves us in any way, we will recall that for about five hundred years, during which religion was still flourishing and a purer doctrine thriving, Christian churches were commonly empty of images. Thus, it was when the purity of the ministry had somewhat degenerated that images were first introduced for the adornment of churches."[69] "When the purity of the ministry had somewhat degenerated . . ." That is, for Calvin, the images fill a vacuum created by the neglect of the right ministry of the Word through preaching and the sacraments. And even if they were confronted by such testings, still churches should not have taken on images as they did.

> But even if so much danger were not threatening, when I ponder the intended use of churches, somehow or other it seems to me unworthy of their holiness for them to take on images other than those living and symbolical [ut alias recipiant imagines quam vivas illas et iconicas] ones which the Lord has consecrated by his Word. I mean Baptism and the Lord's Supper, together with other rites by which our eyes must be too intensely gripped and too sharply affected to seek other images formed by human ingenuity.[70]

That is the real heart of the matter for Calvin: the ordinary means consecrated by the Word so intensely grip and sharply affect us that we do not seek

[69] *Institutes* 1,11,13; ICM, pp. 112, 113; OS 3, p. 101.
[70] *Institutes* 1,11,13; ICM, pp. 113, 114; OS 3, p. 102.

other images.[71] "Satis est." The desire for more than the ordinary means of grace shows that the Word has not been rightly ministered. Recourse to images is a judgment on the church's failure and their continued use is an indication that the purity of the church has been compromised by their users. It is a form of superbia, of speculative ascent to want more than what God has already so fully lavished on us in and through the Word, to have recourse to images. This note is sounded, you recall, in that admonition of the Reformed pastors at St. Germain-en-Laye: "We abide content with . . ." where God has chosen to reveal himself to us, and so on. Images give the church a false substitute for its proper ministry.

That is what is seriously wrong with the argument that images are the books of the uneducated—namely, the church has the responsibility to educate people, has the responsibility to make educated believers. They too—all the people—need to be able to hear and see where God meets them, and not be, as it were, condescended to as uneducated people who should settle for images when they could have the living Word. Using images for those who are kept uneducated

> is not the method of teaching, within the sacred precincts, believing folk whom God wills to be instructed there with a far different doctrine than this trash. In the preaching of the Word and sacred mysteries he has bidden that a common doctrine be set forth for all. But those whose eyes rove about in contemplating idols betray that their minds are not diligently intent upon this doctrine. Therefore, whom, then, do the papists call uneducated whose ignorance allows them to be taught by images alone? Those, indeed, whom the Lord recognizes as his disciples, whom he honors by the revelation of his heavenly philosophy, whom he wills to be instructed in the saving mysteries of his Kingdom.[72]

As we have already noted, Calvin acknowledges both the continuity and discontinuity of the Old and New Testaments. For him, however, the substance of what is revealed is the same in each, whereas the form of the dis-

[71] Here we have a position diametrically different from the one taught by Bonaventura, referred to in footnote 45. Calvin and Bonaventura both emphasize the role of the affections in rightly knowing God, but they differ on the senses which rightly arouse that knowledge. Aquinas' use of Gregory's comparison is rather to argue that images are useful because we do not stop at them but are drawn by them beyond them to the reality which they represent. Aquinas distinguished among three degrees of service or reverence: *latria* due the cross, *hyperdulia* due representations of Jesus' humanity, and *dulia* due images of the saints (see *Summa Theologica* 3a, q. 25, a.3; cf. also 2a2ae, q. 84, a.1, and 2a2ae q. 103). Aquinas followed John Damascus (and in this they both followed St. Basil the Great) in sanctioning prayers before images because the devotion shown the physical object is referred to the divinity it represents. See Jones in Gutmann *IAW*, pp. 84–85.

[72] *Institutes* 1,11,7; ICM, p. 107; OS 3, pp. 93, 94.

pensation, the shape of the accommodation, differs. The glory of God is veiled from people of the Old Testament more than it is with those of the New, because it is finally in the face of Jesus Christ that the glory of God shines forth in such a way—graciously and mercifully—that we can behold it. Here Calvin's interpretation of the second commandment is very much influenced by his understanding of 2 Corinthians, where the comparison is made between Moses and those to whom Jesus Christ has appeared in the flesh. This appearing does not abrogate the provisions of the decalogue, as if the New Testament means that Christians were freer to make images than the people of God in the Old Testament (as argued by the majority Roman Catholic position at St. Germain-en-Laye). On the contrary, now that we have the living image of God, so much more the reason not to have recourse to other images. In a sermon on Deuteronomy 5:4–7, Calvin says,

> . . . The law has been obscured and has had a veil over it, preventing the fathers from having known God in such a way and as intimately as we know [him] today. But all of that is held in very good understanding. For when we make a comparison of the law with the gospel, it is certain that one will find what Paul says is true. For God is not revealed in such familiarity as he reveals himself to us by means of our Lord Jesus Christ who is his living image.[73]

For Calvin, the divine accommodation does not extend to using images as reinforcement of the Word preached and the mysteries celebrated. The *potentia absoluta/potentia ordinata* distinction[74] is very much in evidence here: God could, *de potentia absoluta*, have indeed provided for creation and redemption otherwise; but in fact has provided, *de potentia ordinata*, for our growth in union with Christ through the means appointed for that, namely the preaching of the Word and the sacred mysteries. In fact that is precisely what preaching and the sacraments are for, to make the word of God alive, convincing, assuring—by confirming, reinforcing, making sensible the reality of our union with Christ. The use of images is one of the reasons for the neglect of these ordinary means of grace.

Of course—and it is not a minor point when evaluating the consequences of the Reformed view—Calvin argued for a frequent participation in the Lord's Supper, a reform on which he lost. That means that those who both get rid of all images and do not encourage the frequent celebration of the Lord's Sup-

[73] Benjamin W. Farley, ed. and trans., *John Calvin's Sermons on the Ten Commandments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 52.

[74] One of the best treatments of this distinction remains that in Heiko A. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963).

per have taken only one part of Calvin's reform (the elimination of images) without the positive reform which the other presupposed (the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper). This has created the kind of vacuum into which have, ironically, rushed all sorts of images and practices–exactly in those churches whose preaching had long since forgotten to be remotely Biblical and whose solitary remaining claim to being Reformed was their barrenness of images of Christ and the saints.

Possible Exceptions and the Rule

Calvin does not oppose the use of images in every context. That would also be superstition.

> And yet I am not gripped by the superstition of thinking absolutely no images permissible. But because sculpture and painting are gifts of God, I seek a pure and legitimate use of each, lest those things which the Lord has conferred upon us for his glory and our good be not only polluted by perverse misuse but also turned to our destruction. We believe it wrong that God should be represented by a visible appearance, because he himself has forbidden it [Ex. 20:4], and it cannot be done without some defacing of his glory. . . . Therefore it remains that only those things are to be sculptured or painted which the eyes are capable of seeing: let not God's majesty, which is far above the perception of the eyes, be debased through unseemly representations. Within this class some are histories and events, some are images and forms of bodies without depicting of past events. The former have some use in teaching or admonishing; as for the latter, I do not see what they can afford other than pleasure. And yet it is clear that almost all the images that until now have stood in the church were of this sort. From this, one may judge that these images had been called forth not out of judgment or selection but of foolish and thoughtless craving.[75]

"I do not see what they can afford other than pleasure." By this Calvin does not mean to recommend them. It is a curious thing that Calvin does not bring to bear on his treatment of images what he uses constructively elsewhere in his theology–his view that God creates what delights us, not just what is useful for us. In his view of the macrocosm, Calvin teaches that God's benevolence toward us is seen from the fact that God gives us a world which is not just useful but also delightful.[76] God could have nourished us with tasteless

[75] *Institutes* 1,11,12; ICM, p. 112; OS 3, pp. 100, 101.

[76] Leon Wencelius, *L'Esthétique de Calvin* (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1937); "L'idée de joie dans la pensée de Calvin," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse* 15 (1935) 70–109; and E. Harris Harbison, "The Idea of Utility in the Thought of John Calvin," *Christianity*

food, but added taste for our delight. God could have created the world so that it would function well without such an array of beautiful colors and sounds and patterns, but adds them for our delight.

Calvin is eloquent about how this lavish beneficence of God extends to music, though even he opposed harmonies whose beauty would distract us from the meaning of the words in Psalm singing. Calvin does not seem to extend the argument—about God's also creating for our delight—when it comes to any images in worship. I say he does not seem to. His argument may be that the whole of creation is a theater of God's glory given for us to move us to the right knowledge of God, which right knowledge entails such delight in God's beauty manifest in his creatures—including visual art. In any event, in the context of his discussion of images, Calvin's approval of delight is meager and cautious.

This is closely related to Calvin's rejection of the distinction, noted above, commonly made by the defender of images, between service (*dulia*) and worship (*latria*) paid to images.

> . . . The distinction between *latria* and *dulia*, as they called them, was invented in order that divine honors might seem to be transferred with impunity to angels and the dead. For it is obvious that the honor the papists give to the saints really does not differ from the honoring of God. Indeed, they worship both God and the saints indiscriminately, except that, when pressed, they wriggle out with the excuse that they keep unimpaired from God what is due him because they leave *latria* to him.[77]

Actually, of course, it is *not* at all obvious that the papists give the same honor to God and the saints! Even given the polemical situation which lent itself to hyperbole, Calvin's judgement is extreme and not characterized by that moderation he so often lifts up as befitting Christians. The distinction is a real and important one. The persons using this distinction argued that obviously they do not worship the images; they worship God alone. They do, however, also give service to images as part of their worship of God, since the images refer us to him.

Calvin treats this distinction as a semantic nicety to mask idolatry. He does so because he understands religion or piety to include the kind of knowledge of the living God that cannot be separated from the right service of God. Calvin apparently actually has no experience (either personally validated or ac-

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and History (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1964), 249–269; and Charles Garside, *The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music: 1536–1543* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1979).

[77] *Institutes* 1,12,2; ICM, p. 118; OS 3, p. 106.

knowledged charitably in others) of an image (of Christ or of a cross or of a depiction of saints' faithful witnessing) being an instrument by which sinners are convicted, the love of God manifested, and believers instructed in the way they are to live.[78]

On this point Calvin is more rigorous, or more explicitly negative, than the Tetrapolitan Confession.[79] Its chapter 22 ("Of Statues and Images") begins with a good summary of why the evangelical preacher speaks out against statues and images. "Finally, against statues and images our preachers have applied the holy oracles, chiefly because they began to be worshipped and adored openly, and vain expenditure was devoted to them that was due the hungry, thirsty and naked Christ; and lastly, because by their worship and expenditure they required (both conflicting with God's word) they seek merits with God."[80] After arguing that their position is sustained both by scripture and by the ancient church, the authors of the Tetrapolitan Confession end this chapter on a note that leaves far more latitude than found later in Calvin on images.

> Our men also confess that in itself the use of images is free, but free as it may be, the Christian must consider what is expedient, what edifies, and should use images in such place and manner as not to present a stumbling-block to any. For Paul was prepared to have both meat and wine prohibited him for his entire life if he knew that either in any way injured the welfare of others.[81]

The Tetrapolitan Confession considers the false scandal to be the wrong use

[78] There could be no Zinzendorfian conviction before a face of Christ for Calvin, though one cannot minimize the convicting power of the vivid images–the lived out sacrifices–of the martyrs to the evangelical cause in his own life. It may well be that the visibility of the true church often in hiding, its suffering and poverty as opposed to the *pompa* of the false church, functions for Calvin in the positive way images of Christ or the cross function for those who do not reject completely the use of images in worship. Here I may note what appeared to Roman Catholic critics the inconsistency of–if not Calvin–de Bèze, whose *Icones* of the leaders and martyrs of the Reformed movment was for the edification of believers. There is a strange, though perhaps felicitous inconsistency, here; but I find the argument of Catherine Coats quite correct, when she notes that the text with each picture shows that it is still the text to which the image draws attention. See Catherine Randall Coats, "Reactivating Textual Traces: Martyrs, Memory and the Self in Theodore Beza's Icones (1581)" in *Later Calvinism*, op. cit., pp. 19–28.

[79] On the Tetrapolitan Confession, see Hughes O. Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, Vol. 5, Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1975), 58ff.

[80] Arthur C. Cochrane, ed., *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 80.

[81] Tetrapolitan Confession, chapter 22; Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, op. cit.; Cochrane, op. cit., p. 81.

of images. While the use of images may be a matter of Christian freedom, a person should guard against making their use a stumbling block for others. Calvin was willing *in extremis* to extend that argument to cover those who also made the non-use of vestments, the absence of vestments, a false scandal.[82] He does not, however, extend that argument to the use of images, not even the use of the plain cross, in worship. The second commandment's explicit prohibition, the contrariety of visible images and the invisible God, above all the all-sufficiency of the living Word through the ordinary means of grace add up to Calvin's not applying to the use of images the criterion he applies to indifferent matters: "the edification of faith subject to God."[83]

[82] See his letter to Bullinger on the unnecessary imprisonment over this issue, noted in J. H. Primus, *The Vestments Controversy: An Historical Study of the Earliest Tensions within the Church of England in the Reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth* (Kampen: Kok, 1960).

[83] *Institutes* 3,19,8; ICM, p. 840; OS 4, p. 288.

IV

Sequels to the Colloquy

There is no simple correlation between the failure to achieve a common mind on images at St. Germain-en-Laye and the outbreak of new violence with the massacre at Vassy. The efforts of the French court in 1561 at Poissy and 1562 at St. Germain-en-Laye were parts of a larger diplomatic picture and parts of a larger series of attempts at church reform. Armed conflict was not the result of the failure of the court's efforts at reconciliation; continued processions of saint's statues in processions and prayers to them were not the results of the persuasiveness of the majority Roman Catholic party there; iconoclasm was not the result of the strength of the Reformed's opposition to any use of images in worship. On the other hand, the outcomes of the colloquies of 1561 and 1562 did nothing to impede the intensifying hostilities between uncompromising Roman Catholics and uncompromising Reformed; and those colloquies did little to strengthen the irenic voices among Roman Catholics and Reformed parties alike. The fact that the positions were given room to be heard and were finally met with mutual rejection, was a development that benefited mainly those who looked to Trent for reforming the church in France—and elsewhere.

The stakes were large for everyone concerned in the calling and conduct of the colloquies at the French court the end of 1561 and the beginning of 1562. Just attending such a colloquy was risky business, especially for the Reformed. Catherine de Médici had wagered much in her hopes for sufficient progress in conversations among Reformed and Roman Catholics to gain some reforming status for the court in the French church. As we have seen, her hopes for some progress in agreement on the Lord's Supper and on images were not just wishful thinking. She had some of the most learned Roman Catholic theologians who argued persuasively against the intransigence of most of the Sorbonne theologians and against the increasing intransigence

of French Reformed spokespersons. She also had reason to expect some progress because she knew there was a different Protestant voice which pointed to the Augsburg Confession as a unifying document—and she knew that some Reformed pastors claimed they too could well subscribe to the Augsburg Confession. Moreover, she could figure into her gamble the opposition among other nations (not the least of them the Court of St. James) to anything which would abet the Spanish Hapsburgs. She had the support of those who wanted to prevent or delay more sessions of Trent, called by a Pope who was even more dubious about the genuineness of the French court's Roman Catholicism than he was about the Spanish court's diplomatic activity.

Though Catherine de Médici gambled much by instigating the colloquies at Poissy and St. Germain-en-Laye, not taking the initiative as she did would have been at least as great a gamble. There were already dreadful conflicts abroad in her land, frightful acts of iconoclasm and revenge on iconoclasts, exhausting plots and counterplots, assassination attempts and severe reprisals. Something had to be done to make the various interim ceasefires last. She also had before her the Pope's invitation that the French clergy come to the next session of the General Council called by him. She had much to lose if the colloquies failed—but even more to lose if they were not called and if an effort were not made at gaining the initiative for restoring peace and promoting reform among French Christians.

With these qualifications clearly in mind, we may at least note two sequels to St. Germain-en-Laye. They are sequels that begin a decade of continued diplomatic—and not just military—maneuvering aimed at preventing exactly the kind of tragic non-resolution of problems that was the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre.

The French Court and Trent

One development worth noting is the position in which the colloquies put the French court vis-à-vis the General Council called by the Pope. Catherine had played a relatively successful procrastinating game with regard to the Popes' invitation to a new session of Trent—and she had not played it alone, nor without precedent by the French court. The German princes, as we have noticed, had also by-passed the Pope's invitation. In doing so they had reaffirmed the Augsburg Confession as a document defining positions that could not be compromised at a General Council and as pointing to the reforms that a General Council must take into account. The Court of St. James was not a model of eagerness to accept the Pope's invitation.

It was, however, Catherine de Médici's opposition that most drew the ire

of the Pope. This ire apparently included a personal impatience with the French court and with the Italian-born Queen Mother turned stalwart champion of French initiative and authority. There was no compliant diminution of the petitions that the French clergy directed to the General Council. Among the majority Roman Catholic party at Poissy and St. Germain-en-Laye there were those who deferred to the Pope to grant whatever he thought it important for the French church; but there were those who also had firm convictions about what kinds of reform should be granted the French church by the General Council to whom they had appealed. In any event, the petitions presented by the French clergy were poorly supported by the council and, for the moment, the Pope looked upon the Spanish court as a more stable ally than the French. Once again, this was nothing more than a confirmation of the condition that had long prevailed: the colloquies reinforced that stance.

This is closely related to the shift of influence of the Guises, both within the French court and with respect to the Council of Trent. It is not just that the Guises increasingly gained influence over the Montmorency-Châtillon party. It is also the shift of the direction of their influence, especially that of the Cardinal Lorraine. Once it became apparent that there was little hope for a French national reforming synod, he tried to give French leadership to Tridentine reform and not to leave the latter entirely in the hands of others like Lainez.[84]

The 1561–1562 colloquies may have contributed to the process by which Catherine de Medici's range of options was more and more narrowed and she became more and more forced into an even closer reliance on the Guises. One must put this cautiously, because Admiral Coligny remained one of her closest advisors for years to come. One must put the matter cautiously, also, because the Guises at the close of the Colloquy of St. Germain-en-Laye were not those of a decade later. At this time, they were—in the person of the Duke—

[84] On the articles on the veneration of images, taken 3 December 1563 by Trent, and its use by Roman Catholic bishops in France, see Christin, op. cit., pp. 257–264. See also H. Jedin, "Entstehung und Tragweite des Trienter Dekrets ueber die Bildverherung" in *Kirche des Glaubens* (Fribourg: Herder, 1966), 460–498; Herbert Jedin, *Der Abschluss des Trienter Konzils 1562–1563*, 2d ed. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1963); E. Kirschbaum, "L'influsso del Concilio di Trento nell'arte," *Gregorianum* 26 (1945): 100–116; Robert M. Kingdon, "Some French Reactions to the Council of Trent," *CH* 33 (1964): 146–156; E. Male, *L'art religieux de la fin du XVIe siècle, du XVIIe siècle, et du XVIIIe siècle: Étude sur l'iconographie après le concile de Trente. Italie, France, Espagne, Flandres*, 1951 rev. of 1932 ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1951); A. Roggero, "Il Decreto del Concilio de Trento sulla venerazione delle immagini e l'arte sacra," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 20 (1969): 150–167; G. Scavizzi, "La Theologia Cattolica e le Immagini durante il XVI Secolo," *Storia dell'Arte* 59 (1974): 171–213.

the most effective French Roman Catholic military strategists. At this time they were also most desirous of that moderate reform within France which would consolidate the ability of the French to take care of their own ecclesiastical affairs. The combined effects of the massacre at Vassy and the assassination of the Duke of Guise helped contribute to quite a different and more rigorous agenda on the part of the Guises.

What the Reformed pastors gained in international recognition for their refusal to compromise at St. Germain-en-Laye has to be weighed against their increasing alienation from the court of France. Catherine de Médici had even less reason than before to expect a realistic political alliance with Reformed leaders in France—which was not the same thing as a working relation with Protestant leaders elsewhere.

The Neutrality of German Protestants

Another development worth noting is that Poissy and St. Germain made very clear that, for all their similarities, serious differences persisted between the French Reformed position (as presented at the colloquies in France) and the German Protestant position (as presented in the assembly which earlier in 1561 had renewed its support for the Augsburg Confession).[85]

The Guises clearly saw this latter position as a more viable alternative to the Reformed position on the eucharist at Poissy (which they thought not even to be that of Calvin) and to the categorical position on images they encountered at St. Germain-en-Laye. Whether they, the Guises (and perhaps the Queen Mother with them), saw this Lutheran position as one they would genuinely tolerate within France in the long run, is not clear. They most probably did not. What is clear is that, if it finally had to come to a military showdown with the Reformed in France, the Guises had to determine whether

[85] The "German Protestants" were, of course, more than one group—and for the purposes of the Colloquy of Poissy they were representatives both of Würtemberg Lutherans, of whom Brenz was the most prominent, and of the Palatine Reformed. Melancthon's death, in 1560, left the field open to the controversies from 1561 through 1577 (the final form of the Lutheran Formula of Concord before it was circulated for acceptance), a period which saw the consolidation of Lutherans in an agreement which left less and less room for the Phillipists and for those who came to be lumped together as "the Calvinists." For the period 1561–1577, see Koch, op. cit. One of the intriguing things about these colloquies in 1561 and 1562 is that they occurred just at the beginning of this development—and that nothing in the position which emerged from the Reformed spokespersons there (either on the Lord's Supper, or on images) did anything to discourage lumping all the Reformed together as "Sacramentarians" and "Calvinists." This is particularly ironic since Calvin had, in the formation of the Consensus of Zurich with Bullinger, opposed the language which would lead to being dismissed as "sacramentarian."

the German Protestants were different enough from the French Reformed to prevent them intervening on their behalf.

That is, at least, one of the objectives of the audience held with Duke Christopher of Würtemberg[86] and the Guises and their respective theologians after the breakup of the Colloquy at St. Germain-en-Laye. That colloquy had failed to agree on a moderate position even on the reform of the abuses of images—even on the reform of the use of the cross in worship. Duke Christopher, not at all unlike other Lutheran princes of the period in this regard, watched carefully the theological arguments presented by the Guises and by his own advisors during the audience. He kept an account of the course of the conversations, and satisfied himself with quite pointed and candid questions which were meant to measure proximity to the Augsburg Confession to which he was committed.

On 17 February 1562, Duke Christopher met with his consultant Brenz and, as he notes, the four Guise brothers: ". . . the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Guise on my right, the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Grand-Prior on my left. Brentius was seated in front of us. We six were the only ones in the apartment."[87] At one point, the Cardinal of Lorraine asked Brenz, "What do you say about the Zwinglians and the Calvinists? Are they heretics or not? Should one punish heretics and how?"[88] Brenz replied,

> Although the Zwinglians, and also Calvin, are mistaken on the article of the Lord's Supper, Christian charity demands that one have a good hope with regard to these Christians who have fallen into an error. One has to alert them, exhort them, and pray for them—because in all the articles of our faith, they are in agreement with us.[89]

The previous day, Duke Christopher had met alone with the Duke of Guise. There Duke Christopher said he thought at Poissy the Roman Catholics should have examined the French minister's Confession of Faith, and he hoped for another conference where that would take place.

> As for our agreement with the French ministers, I told him [the Duke of Guise] that we did not differ from them except on the article on the Lord's Supper and that there was hope that we could come to an agreement on that matter, the dispute arising mainly from misunderstandings. I added that he would find a complete exposition of our faith in

[86] A. Muntz, "L'entrevue du duc Christophe de Wurtemberg avec les Guises, à Saverne, peu de jours avant le massacre de Vassy," *BSHPF* 4 (1855): 184–196.

[87] Ibid., p. 189.

[88] Ibid., p. 191.

[89] Ibid., p. 191.

the letters and in the books which I had already sent him and that if he had a particular question to ask me I would gladly respond to it. He asked me then what we understood by idolatry. One is an idolater, I said, when one adores other gods than the true God, or when one looks for other mediators than the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, or when one puts one's confidence in the saints, in the Virgin Mary, or in one's own good works. He answered me saying, "I do not adore any god but the true God. I put my trust uniquely in Jesus Christ. I know well that neither the Mother of our Lord, nor the saints can help me. I know well also that I cannot be saved by my good works, but by the merits of Jesus Christ." I: "That is something I hear with joy. May the Lord maintain you in that confession." He: "We are in agreement on that." I: "But, since you believe and confess this way, you must also declare against everything which is opposed to this confession—like, for example, the cult of the saints, pilgrimages, purgatory, the idolatrous mass and the supposedly unbloody sacrifice of the mass."[90]

In his interview with Duke Christopher, the Cardinal of Lorraine shared a sober judgment: "The council gathered at Trent will do no good. On the other side, there is no longer anything to be hoped for from our Calvinists in France. They want not to hear but to be heard. Believe me, Cousin Sir, if de Bèze and his colleagues at Poissy wanted to accept and sign the Augsburg Confession, I would have gotten agreement from the prelates that we should arrange matters with them."[91] Duke Christopher pushed the point and asked if, in the future, de Bèze and his colleagues approved and signed the Augsburg Confession, would the Cardinal do the same from his side. The Cardinal answered, ". . . I have read the Augsburg Confession. I have read also Luther, Melancthon, Brenz and others. I approve entirely their doctrines, and I would heartily agree with them in everything which concerns the ecclesiastical hierarchy. But it is necessary that I still dissemble for a while, in order to win over several who are still weak in the faith."[92]

Duke Christopher found himself sufficiently satisfied, at least at the formal level and as far as it went, with the position the Guises espoused on justification by grace alone. There was broad agreement on the fact of Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper, and latitude as to how that was to be expressed: but it surely went beyond what they understood to be "the" position of "the sacramentarians" or "the Zwingilians and Calvinists." More to the point for our present study, the Duke and his advisors showed no qualms about the

[90] Ibid., p. 187.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., p. 192.

use of the cross in worship—nor about acts of devotion before the figures of saints which thereby enhanced the right worship of God. This latter reflects Luther's position, which we have noted above, in his 1522 sermons at Wittenberg against the extremes of Carlstadt; and it reflects the position of the minority Roman Catholic party at St. Germain-en-Laye.

The timing of the audience between the Guises and Duke Christopher, between the failure to reach an accord on images at St. Germain-en-Laye and the outbreak of new violence with the massacre at Vassy has led, understandably enough, numerous interpreters to argue that the Guises were intent now on a military settlement—since it seemed to them a political settlement was most unlikely given the intransigence of the Reformed at those colloquies—and went to the interview with Duke Christopher to get assurance that he would not intervene on behalf of the French Reformed.

A debate began soon after the massacre and continues to this day over who should get the dubious credit for this violence. The polemics of the period and subsequent denominationally slanted (though inevitable) interpretations have tended to look for a rather direct and single cause—whereas the one thing that is certain is that many factors contributed to the event. It may be that the Guises were looking for an excuse to crack down on the Reformed, and the Reformed overplayed their hand and gave them that excuse. It may be that the Reformed were so emboldened by their supposed strength—with Condé still fully operative and given a reprise after his second implication in an assassination attempt—that they miscalculated the extent of the range of their safe worship. It may be—as is surely so often the case in the way riots begin in every epoch—it started with escalating exchanges between minor figures on both sides. In any event, the massacre at Vassy played a large role in solidifying the opposition of the two groups and in giving the French Reformed cause an international prominence it had already been coming to have. If the Reformed were killed by those who had supposedly wished for a reform not dictated by Trent, then all the more reason to look to foreign help in the wars of religion.

V

Conclusion

By the time of the Colloquy at St. Germain-en-Laye, iconoclasm and debates about images were givens that had already polarized large segments of the population. Alignments were already well established. The positions presented at St. Germain-en-Laye had, for the most part, already been argued in defense of actions already done by persons caught up in the momentum of their respective causes. The arguments were theological, but they also functioned to provide rationale for existing movements.

People who may have been relatively indifferent to matters of church reform were not indifferent to the issues of property and wealth, social cohesion and justice, which were inextricably bound up with the treatment of images. The frightening and confusing social upheavals, not just the seriousness of debates, associated with the attack on or defense of images, made the questions dealt with at the Colloquy of utmost urgency. Was the association which Roman Catholics commonly made between iconoclastic riots and Reformed theology a correct one—or had the Reformed another understanding of images which disproved this association? Was the association commonly made among Reformed between superstitious uses and Roman Catholic theology a correct one—or had the Roman Catholics another understanding of images which disproved this association? Could the Colloquy accomplish anything to de-escalate the sharp conflicts and polarizing positions over this issue?

The Colloquy failed in the purpose for which it was called. Despite the efforts of the minority of evangelical moderates there, the end result of the Colloquy was mainly to confirm an apparently inherent opposition between the French Reformed pastors' views presented there and the majority Roman Catholic view presented there. With all the diplomatic and social influences that also have to be taken into account, there was operative at the Colloquy a fundamental division over how the opposing parties defined true religion

and understood the place–or absence–of images in true religion. "Religion," for all sides, was virtually the same as "piety" and true "devotion." It had to do with what was sacred and with behavior congruent with the sacred. What for one party was superstition and idolatry for another party was central to true devotion, true religion.

When it came to the Reformed understanding of true religion, the second commandment played an extremely important role. Whereas others do not ignore the second commandment, for the Reformed it assumes a proportion which identifies both the appropriate obedience enjoined upon God's people and the nature of the God behind the commandment. That is not to say that the entire doctrine of God for the Reformed is contained in the second commandment–it is not. For that focus, where we know God and the God we are freed to know, the focus is on Christ in whom all the promises and commandants are fulfilled. It does mean, however, that a permanent testing feature of the true knowledge of the true God known in Christ, by his Word and Spirit, is the third use of the second commandment. That is, for the Christian there is a third use of the law (to guide and correct the freedom of believers) besides the first (the civil) and the second (the pedagogical) uses of the law. Moreover, within that third use of the law, the provisions of the second commandment carry a special weight in informing the meaning and spirit and intent–i.e., the "religion"–encouraged and guided by the commandments.

The idea that any image of God might be of any positive use in knowing and worshipping God was for the Reformed position self-contradictory. By definition, the god known by the use of images was an idol; and the life encouraged by images was contrary to the Christian religion. For the Roman Catholics, even the moderates, a supposed knowledge which despised God's merciful accommodation through sensible means like images was focused on a false god. The rejection of God's mediating ways, which included images, was contrary to the Christian religion. That is the kind of stand-off at the level of conflicting religions at work in the disputes and open violence over images.

The Colloquy at St. Germain-en-Laye contributed to the diminution of the range of what were considered indifferent matters in doctrine and practice. As the excesses by both Reformed and Roman Catholics in France continued, there was more and more of a shift on the spectrum of what each side considered essential matters and indifferent matters. That shift applied also to the use of images in worship, their use or elimination. With that shift came an increasing marginalization of persons of irenic conviction in the emergence and hardening of Christian denominations, including Tredentine Roman Catholicism. The process of denominalization was quite different from the reform of the one Catholic church which all parties claimed they sought. There

was a range of movement, with regard to the reform of the abuse of images, provided by the position of d'Espence among the evangelical Roman Catholics, the position of Luther at Wittenberg against Carlstadt in 1522, and, perhaps, by some slight openings to concessions in the Tetrapolitan Confession. That range was opposed both by the majority Roman Catholic position and by the rather firmly unified position of the later Reformed. Unfortunately, the rigorists—among leaders both of the Reform and of the so-called Counter-reformation—did not see as applying to themselves the ever-present threat of a new legalism.

At the Colloquy, the position for the reform of the abuse of images lost out to the polarized alternatives. However, the moderates' reforming vision and suggestions are to be taken seriously. They are to be taken seriously not simply because of the tragic events which followed in the religious wars; they are also to be taken seriously because of the coherence and persuasiveness of the position they argued. The moderates also wanted the focus to be on Christ, savingly encountered and known through preaching and sacraments, and they argued that the use of the plain cross in worship was a gift for strengthening that focused faith. The reform of the abuse of images would, according to them, serve the edification of that faith.

That is a good criterion for those, Reformed or otherwise, who do indeed see a role for the plain cross in public and private worship—that it reinforce the living Word which comes through the ordinary means of grace. They may well choose to do what Calvin did not do: extend to the use of the plain cross what he says about the third part of Christian freedom, the freedom to be indifferent about indifferent things.

> To sum up, we see whither this freedom tends: namely, that we should use God's gifts for the purpose for which he gave them to us, with no scruple of conscience, no trouble of mind. With such confidence our minds will be at peace with him, and will recognize his liberality toward us. For here are included all ceremonies whose observance is optional, that our consciences may not be constrained by any necessity to observe them but may remember that by God's beneficence their use is for edification made subject to God.[93]

[93] *Institutes* 3,19,8; ICM, p. 840; OS 4, p. 288.

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